PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
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HOW LONG is Boracay going to be the country's premier pristine beach attraction? Not for long, according to photographer Rony Vitug who recently visited and saw stray dogs at water's edge and diggings on the beach reportedly for the laying of septic outlets though others claim it is for a sewerage. There goes paradise.

Obama scores in debate

Surveys give Democrat edge over McCain in 1st faceoff

OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI—IN THE SHADOW OF A DEEPENing financial crisis, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama battled over spending, taxes and the Iraq war in their first debate on Friday, sharply questioning each other's judgment and ability to lead on the biggest issues facing the United States.

Obama, 47, vying to make history as America's first black president, branded McCain as the inheritor of President George W. Bush's unpopular legacy of "failed" economic and foreign policies.

McCain, 72, presented himself as a reformer and posed as a superior potential commander in chief, repeatedly saying Obama did not "understand" foreign policy threats or was "naive" in his outlook on the world.

Most leading US newspapers offered a cautious analysis of the first debate, stopping short of declaring any of the candidates the outright winner.

But an instant telephone poll by CNN and Opinion Research Corp. scored a decisive win for Obama among 524 debate watchers. Asked who did the better job, 51 percent said Obama and 36 percent said McCain.

The Democrat had a yawning lead of 58 to 37 percent on handling the economy, and a narrower edge of 52 to 47 percent on the Iraq war, the pollsters said.

Another snap poll by CBS News and Knowledge Networks of about 500 uncommitted voters had 39 percent saying Obama was the winner against 24 percent for McCain. A total of 37 percent said it was a draw.

In a 90-minute debate that gave undecided voters their first chance to directly compare the candidates, McCain and Obama clashed over their economic and security approaches to

OBAMA, A-17

BFAD takes 4 brands out of testing list

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BARELY A DAY AFTER IT RELEASED A partial list of products to be tested for the presence of the industrial chemical melamine, the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) backtracked and delisted four brands.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque yesterday also clarified that not all brands in the partial list released on Friday night were covered by the ban on all China-made milk and milk products. He said the banned products were only those with labels stating that these were manufactured in China.

"There should be a qualifier. If a product is on the list, and it is from China, then it is banned in the meantime. If a product is on the list but is not made in China, then it is just for testing and can still be sold and bought," Duque said.

BFAD Director Leticia Gutierrez said the four brands were removed from the partial list of products to be tested because these were actually manufactured in New Zealand.

BFAD TAKES A6

BOX-OFFICE HIT
Husband and wife actors Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez draw a record crowd of 128 school children at the Inquirer main office in Makati City on Saturday. (Story on Page A6.)

Activist of '70s now chief of PNP

By Alcain Pupa

THE NEW CHIEF OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police was an activist in his freshman year at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City in 1972.

"That was shortly before martial law, when activism was at its height," Jesus Verzosa said, recalling how, as a gangly 18-year-old, he stood out in protest rallies.

But the burst of student activism began to fade for Verzosa after martial law was declared in September of that year. "I wasn't a real advocate of armed struggle, only of reformist change. Also, I began to see there was no future in the movement. It offered no alternative solution," he said.

The next year, his father, a colonel, convinced him to take the entrance exams at the Philippine Military Academy.

"Before that, I knew nothing of the PMA. All I knew was that it was involved in parades. The first time I stepped into the PMA was my first time in Baguio," Verzosa recalled

ACTIVIST A-10

Justice Puno for president? 'It's destiny'

By Ariye de la Cruz
Courthouse

DURING A RECENT PRIVATE visit to Palawan, Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno was asked the all-important question.

"Should you consider the presidency?"

With a smile, Puno responded meaningfully, "That's destiny. To be president is destiny."

JUSTICE A-9

'Drama king': Editor's passion strikes gold

By John Nery

INQUIRER DRAMA CRITIC GIBBS Cadiz has a deep passion for Philippine theater.

How deep? In 1993, in his very first job, he used his first-ever paycheck to buy season tickets to Repertory Philippines.

"The first ticket I bought was for the musical 'Stop the World, I Want to Get Off,' at Rep's Insular Life Theater in Makati," he remembers.

DRAMA, A-11

Music: Why pay when you can have it for free?

By Pocholo Concepcion
Entertainment

HOW DO YOU KEEP THE MUSIC playing?

Rosemarie Bario is an ardent music fan. Time was when she would buy every single CD of her favorite artists. Bario, a freelance radio and TV voice talent, would even go hunting for hard-to-find albums in the stores of Singapore and Hong Kong.

But in the past three years, Bario has resorted to burning her own copies from albums that she borrows from friends. Sometimes she would ask friends to download from the Internet songs that strike her fancy. She knows of many others who do the same.

"Why pay when you can have it for free?" is her raw refrain. "Times are hard."

Philip Concepcion, another former

MUSIC A6

Editor's Note: Let's not go there again. Times are tough. You know it. I know it. We're going through it. Enough said. It's time to do something. Now. And quick. The newest proposal now— for every aspect of your life. Let us know about your own suggestions that are working to get you through the rough times. If we are together, we can tough it out. Send suggestions to jpernando@inquirer.com.ph.)

Project Editor Joan V. Tumonda Jr.

• **2 strong** quakes rock Metro Manila, Mindoro / A4 • **Oldest senator** wants to work longer hours / A8 • **Filmmaker** Cirio Santiago dies; 72 / A6
• **Are they** on or off? Read all about Tonyboy and Gretchen. • Nelly's Day turns into a birthday bash. **SUNDAY LIFESTYLE**
• **5 beautiful** women bare the secrets of their youthful looks. Clue: They're noninvasive, nonsurgical. **SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE**
• **Nini Q. Avencena:** Gilmore is in my heart / METRO A19 • **Gabby C.** blames father's fatal heart attack on his manager's court case vs him. • Vina Morales confirms pregnancy; somehow biz pa still going thru annulment **ENTERTAINMENT**

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bureau Lobaco de Filipinas group of islands will experience sunny, weather while the rest of Northern Luzon will have isolated showers. The rest of Luzon and Western Visayas will experience cloudy skies and rains.

Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Kalibo	Cloudy with Rains
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Dumaguete	Partly Cloudy
Virac	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy

SIX DIGIT

SUERTRES

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN

P7,654,764.60

'MILF did not provoke aerial attack'

CHR probe shows PAF pilot who killed 6 civilians was not fired at

By Alexis Romero

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS CHAIR Leila de Lima said the initial CHR investigation into the deaths of six civilians in an aerial attack in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, on Sept. 8 showed the attack was not provoked by members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

This contradicted the military's claim that the MILF had fired at three planes, leading the pilot to fire back, killing the civilians, among them, two children and a pregnant teenager, in Barangay Tee, Datu Piang.

In a talk with reporters during the change of police command ceremonies in Camp Catotar, Dr. Lima said witnesses had told the CHR they were not exchange of gunfire between the military plane and the MILF.

"Witnesses have told us that they heard two loud explosions which were not preceded by any gunfire. At the first (from the military plane) was not in retaliation of anything," she said.

But Ms. Lima stressed that this was just the result of an initial investigation which would need a "further probe."

She also said their independent probe confirmed the deaths of the six civilians and that they had died due to bullet wounds. Dr. Lima explained that they have yet to determine if the two loud explosions were caused by a rocket attack or high-caliber fire.

The military had said there was no way of knowing how the six had died because, according to Muslim tradition, the bodies were buried before sundown after death. It also claimed that MILF members were trying to escape on bancas with some civilians, probably their relatives, when the plane on reconnaissance patrol spotted them. The MILF members, the military said, fired at the plane.

No sanctions on pilot

Early this week, Armed Forces Chief of staff Gen. Alexander Yano said no sanctions would be slapped on the military pilot who flew the plane since the plane was under hostile fire and had to fire back.

An Inquirer 4-team report also on the incident quoted 60-year-old Mindi Bangkong as saying explosions as and aroused him. Dispatching in Barangay Tee had said many residents fleeing on human. His shaved had lured his wounded family and put them on three boats.

2 rockets fired

Mindi said he was about 100 meters behind the first boat when a Philippine Air Force plane appeared. "I saw the plane dive and found for my grandchildren and the two rockets."

Mindi said he five of his six grandchildren—two boys and three girls, including a pregnant 18-year-old. Four died instantly; another succumbed to wounds in the hospital. Another grandson was violently wounded. Datu Ibrahim, Datu Binasingcad Mindi, is recuperating at the new he and was promised to have died.

Photographs made available to the Inquirer showed the mortally wounded, including close-ups of flesh ripped apart.

The MILF requested that the fighting that erupted in central Mindanao after a peace agreement between the government and the MILF collapsed has so far claimed 71 lives—43 civilians except for a colonel and three soldiers.

Civilian killed, 7 hurt in latest clash

DATU PIANG, MAGUINDANAO—A civilian was killed and seven evacuees were wounded when soldiers and Muslim rebels exchanged fire near an evacuation center here on Friday evening, officials said yesterday.

Dr. Tahir Sahali, secretary of the Department of Health in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said the fighting, which lasted from 6 to 8 p.m., occurred near an evacuation center in the Gumbay Elementary School in Barangay Poblacion.

"The bullets coming from either the military or the rebels hit some evacuees staying at the Gumbay El-ementary School. A 40-year-old man was killed," Sahali said. He did not provide any names.

Col. Marlon Ardan, commander of the ARMM's 601st Infantry Brigade, said the advance command base of the 54th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Limao in Barangay Bunyan was being harassed by rebels who fired more than a dozen rocket-propelled grenades which also hit some houses.

Ardan said the soldiers retaliated and a firefight ensued.

"We have yet to determine whether or not they suffered casualties when our troops swallowed and drove them away," he said, adding that none of the soldiers were hurt.

Maj. Bernardo Aquilan, commander of 54th Infantry Battalion, said "the bullets that hit the civilians came from the enemy side and not from us."

He said the soldiers pursued the fleeing rebels as far as the poblacion, which was only about 200 meters away.

But Eid Kabalu, the civil-military affairs chief of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said the MILF rebels involved in the clashes did not target the civilians.

He said the injuring of civilians should be investigated to determine where the bullets had come from.

But if indeed the bullets had come from the MILF it was unfortunate, he said.

"If that is the case, they are to be called part of collateral damage," Kabalu said.

The military said the MILF would be expected to stage more harassment in the offensive against MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato and his followers, who perpetrated the attacks and killings in several Central Mindanao villages last month, was entering "endgame." Edwin G. Kamlian and Joel Joy Alcaraz, Inquirer Mindanao

'Ofel' strengthens, brings rains

By Tjitte Jacobs

TYPHOON 'OFEL' YESTERDAY FURTHER intensified over sea and threatened to bring strong weather to extreme northern Luzon.

The typhoon was packing maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometers per hour and gusting up to 230 kph as it traveled over Bashi Channel near Batanes, around Taiwan.

It is a strong super typhoon proportions as a super typhoon packs maximum sustained winds of 220 kph, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center.

At 4 p.m. Saturday, the typhoon was spotted 530 km east of Basco, Batanes.

Signals up

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) hoisted signal No. 3 over Batanes and No. 2 over the Calayans and Babuyan groups of islands.

"These areas will experience stormy weather," said Forecaster Salvador Arriola in a phone interview.

Pagasa raised Signal No. 1 over Cagayan, Isabela, Ilagan, Mt. Province, Ifugao, Benguet, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Kalinga, Abra, Apayao, Pangasinan and Zambales.

"These areas should brace for rainy weather winds," Arriola said.

The typhoon, moving northwest at 19 kph, was however to pass over Batanes and skim into Taiwan this afternoon. It will not hit any of the Philippine areas of responsibility by late Monday.

But afternoon, it is estimated to be off the coast of southern Taiwan.

"It will not hit us," said Pagasa director Prisco Nilo in an interview.

Enhance monsoon

The typhoon is expected to enhance the southwest monsoon and bring rains over the rest of northern Luzon, including Metro Manila and western Visayas, according to the weather bureau.

"People in these areas should expect cloudy skies with scattered rains showers and thunderstorms," Javier said. "Metro Manila will experience monsoon rains."

An active low pressure area remained stationary some 340 km from Iba, Zambales, but posed no threat yet to the country, he said.

No big exposure to US stocks, but we can't show you—GSIS

By Jerome Aning

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURance System (GSIS) yesterday said it was not true the state pension fund had a big exposure to the troubled American stock market but refused to release a detailed financial statement on its $500 million (P24 billion) Global Investment Program (GIP).

GSIS spokesperson Estrella Elamparo said the GSIS would not be pressured by vested interest groups into coming out with a detailed financial listing or mark-to-market valuation of its GIP although it welcomed a congressional inquiry into the matter.

Elamparo said a mark-to-market valuation, as demanded by some sectors, would not do justice to the GIP at present as it cannot be expected to immediately provide the GSIS with a windfall, having started only last year.

In an interesting and flattery, mark-to-market valuation is the act of assigning a value to a position held in a financial instrument based on its current market price.

In a statement, Elamparo said the GSIS global fund was being managed by BNY Investment Management and Credit Agricole Asset Management, two of the biggest fund firms now manage $300 million of GSIS funds each.

Wrong impression

Elamparo lamented that some sectors were trying to create the wrong impression that the state pension fund had a big exposure in the American market.

"That's just not true and the GSIS is not inclined to further comment on assertions that have no basis," she said.

Earlier, the GSIS Board having invested in embattled US firms Lehman Brothers and American International Group.

"The GSIS will not be pressured into a knee-jerk reaction based on wrong assumptions on GIP or just because certain interest groups are making a lot of noise," she said.

The GSIS, she said, had taken "every necessary move to ensure" the success of its overseas investment program. It said a rigid selection process had short-listed only those fund managers with at least $1.00 billion in managed assets.

Requirements

Elamparo, also concurrent chief legal counsel of the GSIS, said fund managers are required to comply with the absolute annual return requirement of at least eight percent and a ceiling of seven percent on portfolio volatility.

Elamparo also said GSIS Executive Vice President Eurlpacio Clemente had impressed the agency's readiness to have any congressional inquiry/hearing of its policies.

The GSIS is the top government-owned and -controlled corporation, with P441.8 billion in total assets and P54.9 billion in claims and benefits paid to members in 2007.

Opportune time

Elamparo elevated that the GSIS waited for the most opportune time to liquidate its investments, citing its sale of San Miguel Corp. shares last year which netted GSIS a hefty profit.

She said the GSIS tested the offshore investment market in 1997 by investing $10 million, which netted a $2-million in profits two months later.

Elamparo said the GSIS provides an accurate financial picture for its members and the general public by releasing its annual financial statements.

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2 quakes, minutes apart, rock S. Luzon, Metro Manila

By TJ Burgonio

TWO EARTHQUAKES ORIGINATING IN Occidental Mindoro, jolted areas of southern Luzon and Metro Manila before noon yesterday but did not cause damage or injury, officials said.

The first quake at 11:04 a.m., with a magnitude of 5.1, occurred at sea at a depth of 91 kilometers, some 34 km southwest of Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

It was felt at intensity 5 in Calapan City and Naujan in Oriental Mindoro; 4 in Mauban, Los Baños City and Agoncillo, Batangas; and 3 in the cities of Batangas, Tagaytay, Quezon and Makati.

Five minutes later, another quake, this one with a magnitude of 4.8, occurred at sea 51 km northwest of Mamburao at a depth of 147 km, Phivolcs said.

It was felt at intensity 3 in Calapan, 4 in Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro and 3 in Quezon City.

The tremblors, which were tectonic in origin, did not cause any damage to property, Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum said, citing reports from the field.

"They were caused by movements along the Manila Trench," he said in a text message, referring to the fault line that runs from southern Luzon to Mindoro. "The quakes were so deep that the shakings did not cause any damages. There was no tsunami."

Magnitude measures the energy of an earthquake, while intensity is the force of the shaking felt or observed by the public, Phivolcs explained.

The Manila Trench is an ocean trench in the South China Sea west of the Philippines that has a depth of about 5,000 meters.

"Many quakes are centered along this length of the fault, and are normally not felt," Solidum said.

He said seismographs had recorded some aftershocks.

With a report from Madeleine T. Nivada, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and AFP

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Managing population growth
PHOTO BY ... NOT HERE
To address the increasing incidence of hunger in the country, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo directed the Department of Health and the Commission on Population (POPCOM) to manage population growth so that a stable Philippine economy is enhanced and the fruits of progress benefit the majority of Filipinos.
According to POPCOM Executive Director Teresa M. Oates, "The larger the population, the greater is the demand for natural resources and manufactured goods and services, giving scant time for our natural resources to regenerate and essentials for production inputs and services ... to supply our basic needs."
The National Statistics Office, in its 2007 Population Census, listed the population growth rate (PGR) at 2.04. This is a good indication that by 2010, the government's targeted growth rate of 1.95 would be achieved.
The decline in population growth withness this demand for resources, which otherwise would have been devoted to an increasing number of people. With less people to attend to, government is in a better position to accelerate its programs for economic growth, education, health and nutrition, and other basic social services. This is in line with the 10-point agenda of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which is focused on eradicating the worst forms of human deprivation and improving the accessibility and affordability of essential services including clean water, health care, and basic education.
The government is actively pursuing population management to be able to meet the needs of the basic unit of society, the family. It is in this context that POPCOM addresses the need for family planning services, reproductive health, and maternal and child nutrition. POPCOM, in coordination with other agencies, leads the task of promoting natural family planning, which involves the conduct of Responsible Parenthood (RP) classes nationwide. Local government units (LGUs) are tasked to deliver family planning services similar to their localities.
Mariano Montayo
Alumni, Cavite Jr. Polytechnic

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The current issue relating to the safety of Chinese milk powder products is confined only to products manufactured in China using China-sourced raw milk. This incident does not have any bearing on our products marketed here in the Philippines as we do not import any milk powder products from China.
We owe consumer safety and health issues with great seriousness at Fonterra. We will continue to ensure that our products meet the highest safety and quality standards.
We thank you, our customers, for your continued support and loyalty. Fonterra will continue to serve you dairy for life.

Disabled Marikina residents get 20% discount

THE MARIKINA CITY government has announced physically challenged residents of discounts at local business establishments similar to what enjoyed by senior citizens.

Mayor Marides Fernando recently ordered all business establishments in the city to implement the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and Other Purposes.

The guidelines state that persons with disabilities are entitled to a 20-percent discount for all basic services, just like citizens 60 years and older.

Fernando said this was in accordance with the rules issued by National Council on Disability affairs.

"All physically challenged residents in the city can be certain that they can avail of discounts on all basic services enjoyed by senior citizens," Fernando said in a statement.

She urged encouraged all physically challenged residents to register at the City Social Welfare and Development Office to secure their discount IDs.

Among the businesses covered by the discounts are hotels, restaurants, recreational centers, theaters, drama houses, concert halls and arrivals.

Medical tests such as X-rays and CT scans and laboratory fees, as well as dental services, in all government and private facilities in Marikina are also covered by the discount.

The differently-abled may also avail themselves of his discounts on domestic air and sea transport, and public railways, jeepneys, tricycles and buses.

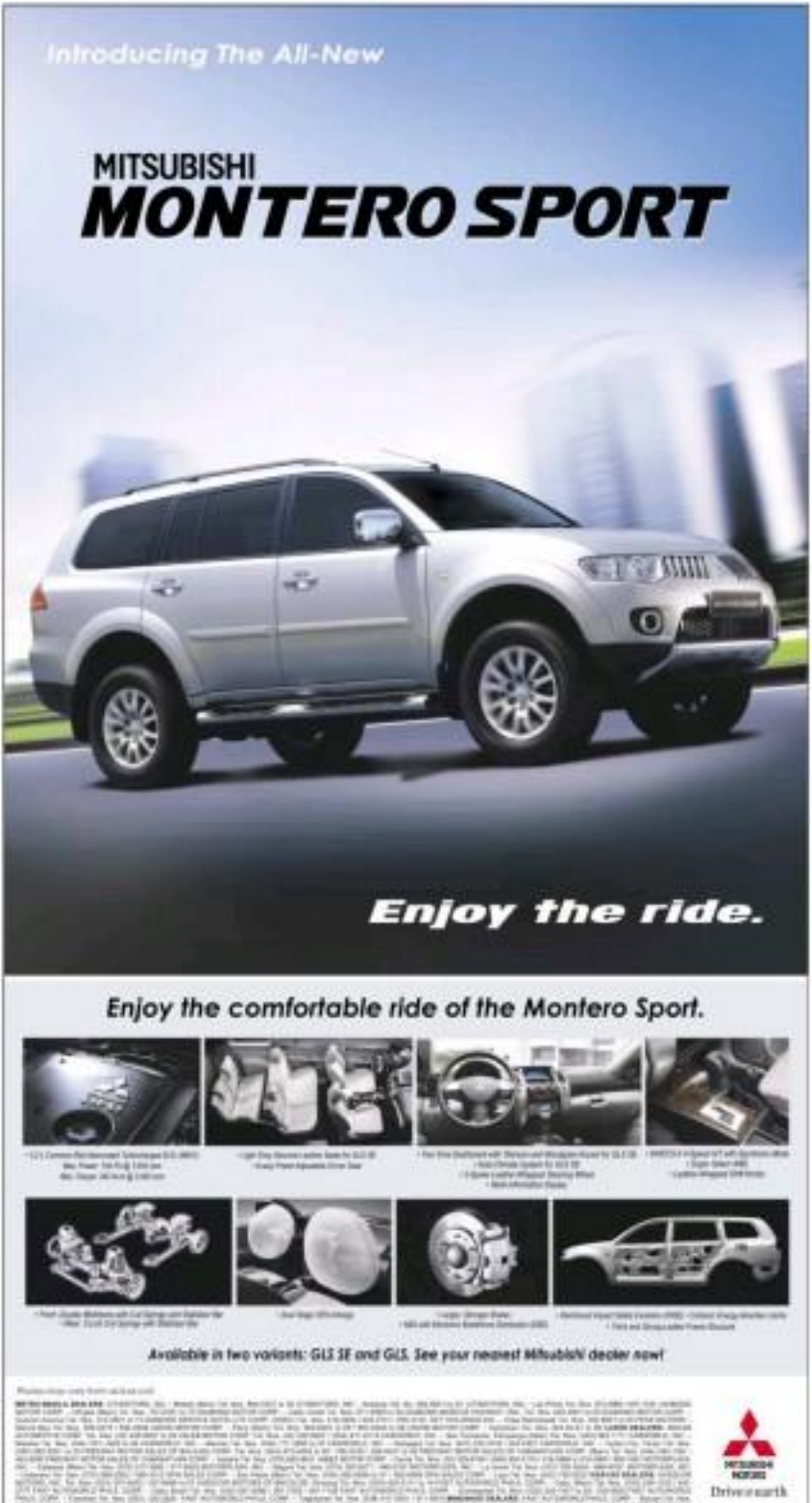
The privilege, Fernando said, includes educational institutions through the grant of scholarships, financial aid, subsidies and other incentives. Nancy Carvajal

Las Piñas folk mark feast day

THE OLDEST AND biggest of the seven chapels under the Good Shepherd Parish of Las Piñas City, St. Michael's Chapel in Sergeneville, celebrates its centennial day of its patron, Michael the Archangel, today.

The celebration started with a nightly novena that will culminate today with a Mass and procession around the streets of Sergeneville. Participants include the chapel memories composed of choirs, lectors, lay ministers, women's groups and the youth.

For St. Michael Chapel Pastoral Council, led by Remy Corral with Tina Montealegre as co-chair, has enjoined residents and their guests to help make the recent celebration meaningful and memorable.



No respite for GMA on return from US trip

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-AR-royo plunged right back to work upon returning yesterday from a six-day working visit to the United States.

The President arrived at about 2 a.m. yesterday (8 p.m. in the US) at the Philippine National Police headquarters at Camp Crame for the farewell ceremonies of the police command.

She is now in New York to address the 59th United Nations General Assembly, hold meetings with world leaders and deliver the Philippine report on the Millennium Development Goals. While at the UN, she also campaigned for the election of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago to the International Court of Justice.

The President starts a busy work week with a visit today to Bacolor, Pampanga, where she will sign into law a bill creating the Bacolor Rehabilitation Council, official will carry out the rehabilitation of the town that was buried in lahar by the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

Authored by Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzalez Jr. and Sen. Peregrino Lapitan III, the law authorizes the allocation of about P1.5 billion in special funds in the 2004 budget for the town's rehabilitation.

Before going to Bacolor, Ms Arroyo will attend a Mass commemorating the 96th birth anniversary of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, at the National Library on T.M. Kalaw Street in Manila. She will then inspect the newly established electronic library at the facility.

It was the President's father who initiated the construction of the National Library during his tenure (1961-1965).

On Monday the President will fly to Northern Luzon to check on the progress of ongoing road and other infrastructure projects. One of these is the 47-kilometer Cataratan-Calbiga-Lope de Vega-Jipapad which is being built at a cost of P643.72 million.

Funding has yet to be found for the proposed rehabilitation of the 44.22-km San Isidro-Lupa De Vega Road that will cost P1.2 billion.

On Tuesday she will hold a Cabinet meeting in Guinsan, Eastern Samar. According to Palace officials, Ms Arroyo's visit to the province highlights Eastern Samar's potential as a tourist destination. The President will visit the towns of Arteche and Balangiga, the site of the infamous massacre of Filipinos by American soldiers during the Philippine-American War.

The President will also conduct an aerial inspection of the construction and rehabilitation of several stretches of the Arteche road network that will link Eastern Samar and Northern Leyte province.

She will inaugurate the Guinsaugon Agricultural Farm-to-market road project in Arteche, a 26.33-km stretch of the P86-million Arteche farm-to-market road project for the benefit of some 80,000 residents of 33 barangays.

Ms Arroyo has instructed the Department of Public Works and Highways to allocate P411 million for eight road projects in Eastern Samar, and P562 million for nine road projects in Northern Samar to complete the Samar Circumferential Road Network.

From Arteche, the President will proceed to Balangiga to receive by ceremonies at the ruins of Cajar, Federico Aguador, who led the assault of the townspeople on the US regiment that resulted in the killing of 48 US soldiers.

In retaliation, the Americans torched the town on Sept. 28, 1901, and took away the Balangiga church bells in war booty. The bells are still in the US.

Next stop is Guinan where the President will preside over the National Economic and Development Authority-Cabinet meeting to promote surfing and beach tourism on Calicoan island, some 20 minutes by boat from Guiuan. The island is fast emerging as one of the country's top surfing destinations, boasting long white sand beaches, lagoons, forests, caves and waterfalls.

She will stay overnight at the resort before proceeding to Borongan City on Wednesday for the "Manilakbo Festival." Dubbed the festival of smiles, Manilakbo is celebrated with street dance competitions, beauty pageants, drum and bugle corps competitions, food festivals, sporting events, cultural contests, agricultural trade fairs, garden shows and the like. Michael Lim Ubac

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, September 26, 2004
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 36:1, 4-5b, 10-17

The mind of Yahweh came to me in these terms, You say: "Yahweh's way is not just! Why, Israel! Is my patience wrong? Is it not rather that yours is wrong? If the righteous man dies after turning from his righteousness and sinning, he dies because of his sin. And if the wicked man does what is good and, right, after turning from the sins he committed, he will save his life: he will live and not die, because he has opened his eyes and turned from the sins he had committed."

2nd Reading: 1Tm 6:2-12

I I say advise you in the name of Christ and it you can bear it in the name of him, if we share the same spirit and are capable of unity and compassion, then I beg of you, make me very happy: have one love, one spirit, one feeling, do nothing through rivalry or vain conceit. On the contrary let each of you gladly consider the others as more important than yourselves. Do not seek your own interests, but rather those of others. Your attitude should be the same as Jesus Christ had:

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,
but emptied himself,
taking on the nature of a servant, made in human likeness,
and in his appearance found out a man,
He humbled himself by being obedient to death,
death on the cross.
That is why God exalted him
and gave him the Name which outshines all names,
so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should bend
in heaven, on earth and among the dead,
and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is the Lord
to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: Mk 11:28-32

Jesus went to the chief priests and the elders, "What do you think of this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said to him: 'Son, today go and work in my vineyard.' And the son answered: 'I don't want to.' But later he thought better of it and went. Then the father went to the second and gave him the same command. That son replied: 'I will go, sir.' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what the father wanted?" They answered, "The first." And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, the publicans and the prostitutes are ahead of you on the way to the kingdom of heaven. For John came to show you the way of righteousness but you did not believe him, yet the publicans and the prostitutes did. You were witnesses of this, but you neither repented nor believed him."

Commentary

Obedience is a word that has its roots in the Latin and its heart in the parable, the brother who truly heard the wishes of the father is the one who did his will.

Listening to the Word of God and truly taking it to heart is demonstrated in our deeds. God invites us to accomplish the task of building up the Kingdom of God. As we show love to Jesus through our daily reading of His Word, may we have boldness to tell Him in our lives: do the positive words, "If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

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6,000 OFWs stranded on Oman-UAE border

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN Affairs yesterday ordered its consulate in the Middle East to extend assistance to some 6,000 stranded Filipino workers stranded on the border of Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Acting Foreign Secretary Esteban Conejos Jr. said the OFWs were stranded on the border because of recent changes in the UAE's one-week search rule effective July 28.

The new policy directs poor-out holders of visas to the UAE to reapply as tourists, resulting to the rejection of thousands of visa applications from Filipinos.

"The Filipinos had been returned since March (about the new rules)," said Conejos.

Nevertheless, he said, the DFA would appeal to the UAE government not to deport them soon.

At any rate, the DFA would first coordinate with UAE officials before deciding whether or not to repatriate the Filipinos, Conejos said.

He stressed repatriation would be a last resort considering the big number (of OFWs involved).

Embassy officials in Muscat, Tehran and Abu Dhabi, as well as the Philippine consulate in Dubai, have been mobilized to deal with the problem.

"The decision to repatriate the OFWs will depend on how the UAE government responds to our request for leniency," Conejos said.

Conejos said that since Sept. 25, a four-man executive team from the embassy in Muscat has been going to the border in Al Buraimi, along the border with Oman.

Nearly 1,000 OFWs were reported to have set up at the Al Buraimi border area.

The stranded OFWs said they were being asked by the hotels to deposit their passports upon checking in.

The OFWs who exited from Al Ain in the UAE as a result of the change in visa policy noticed Oman using three-day border visas issued by Omani authorities. However, their visas expired before they could get back UAE exit visas to enter UAE.

Starting Aug. 1 this year, Oman also stopped the practice of issuing visas to regular exit holders.

Arnulfo Marifosa, the coordinator at the embassy in Oman, said that Filipinos and many other foreign nationals entered Oman without being aware of the new Omani immigration law.

CHIEF ATTRACTION Chief Justice Reynato Puno rises next to Pramoedya's top count on comic-art, his Underground Wires in Puerto Princesa, to have some private, happy time with his grandchildren Alexandria, 7, and Elijah, 5 • The subterranean river is nominated as one of Seven Natural Wonders of the World. AMADO QUIRANTE/PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Justice Puno for president? 'It's destiny'

From page A1

The answer united the questioners: Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, just like because it was not a "yes" or a "no."

"There's a possibility that it may become a 'yes.' Who knows, the Chief Justice may well be the man we need to bring real greatness to this country," Hagedorn said.

Early-bird aspirants

In a later interview, Hagedorn said that as a local official, he has been examining the credentials and intentions of the early-bird presidential aspirants for the 2010 race.

Quickly, he went through each of the perceived and known candidates. One aspirant is "going politics dong ong signing locally suited for the mankind," Hagedorn said to "locally insane for suggesting that we cut our trees on the highway." Still another is "too young and too inexperienced" that he would "just be eaten" by the generals.

One has a "fake environmental agenda," another has no clear focus on the issues, "presumed comedy long as bangis sa siya (shadow boxing with the issues)." This aspirant "is scared as hell to be president because he knows he can't do it," another has very clear business interests to protect, and another has been described by another presidential aspirant as "dahilanang sira pero (he is a dangerous man)."

"I just could see any anyone with sufficient credibility like mah the Chief Justice come, especially after cheating the corruption case against the Court of Appeals justices," said Hagedorn.

Hagedorn noted that the Chief Justice will be retiring by 2018 which would qualify him, he said, to run for the presidency, particularly because of his credibility and track record in the judiciary.

Far from agenda

But on this particular weekend, the presidency was far from the agenda of the Chief Justice in whom this trip was a rare private time for him to play the role that he loves most—that of doting "lolo" to Alexandria, 7, and Elijah, 5.

With his family, Puno did what many other visitors and tourists to Palawan come to do—marvel at the wonder of Palawan's Underground River.

"This is my first time to visit the underground river," he said as he led his excited grandchildren by the hand through the cave entrance. At one point, he could be heard telling Alexandria to look and wave at the camera.

After exploring the awesome underground marvel, the Chief Justice promised to rest his woes to the cushy cement for the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, to which the Underground River has been nominated and is ranked in the top 10.

Before the visit to the underground river in Sabang, the Chief Justice planted tree seedlings in the Barangay Inagawan watershed in the mountains of Hagnipinan who said, "were the trees need Justice too."

Spreading the word

Puno was also the main speaker at a fellowship meeting of a group of Christian businessmen from all over Palawan organized by preacher Cesar Hag, at one time the most controversial inmate of the maximum security compound of the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

"Time went not even have yet when he was jailed because of a controversial rape case, the one that involved the giving of candies. He became a preacher and found his calling while he was a prisoner, a converted felon," Puno said of him.

In 1963, Ceg a Chinese lumber executive, was convicted of raping his tomboy Cebuhog, the special secretary of the Philippine Commodore's chief. Cebuhog had been offered some candy by her rapist, which made her sweat and dizzy. Cebuhog suffered a nervous breakdown and years of mental illness as a result of the rape.

The Chief Justice said he makes it a point to accommodate invitations from Christian groups to speak on nonissues or unknowns so schedule allows, to be able to spread not just his convictions or uphold justice but to "share the word about salvation."

BFAD takes 4 brands out of testing list

From page A1

Three brands are Anchor Liv Milk, Anlene Milk Low Fat, Anmum Materna and Anmum Materna Chocolate, Gutierrez said the decision.

"We are deleting these four brands from the list because they did not violate our rules. They were manufactured in New Zealand [so] they are not covered by the ban order," she said.

The BFAD is the only government agency tasked to certify product safety.

Temporary ban

The Department of Health temporarily banned the importation and sale of infant formula and milk products from China following the discovery that melamine had been added to watered-down milk in China.

As many as four children have died and more than 53,000 others have fallen ill after drinking the tainted milk.

According to Duque, the Philippines remains free of contamination and, according to the BFAD, does not import infant formula from China.

Asked how the New Zealand products ended up on the BFAD list of products to be tested for melamine, Gutierrez said it was part of routine inspection.

"Market monitoring is a routine operation even without this melamine incident. These products were among those we have collected for inspection, but we are sure just as monitoring on milk and milk-based products from China," she said.

Gutierrez said that aside from milk and milk products from China, the BFAD would also test other food products with milk ingredients as a precautionary measure, to determine whether these products used contaminated milk from China.

Banned from the market

Asked how the partial list that the BFAD had issued should guide consumers, Duque said the listed products which were manufactured in China should be removed.

He said the other listed products not made in China could still be consumed.

Gutierrez said the China-made products on the list were among those banned and therefore should no longer be sold in the market.

She called on consumers to report to the BFAD stores still selling milk and milk products manufactured in China. (The list of products being tested can be found in the website www.bfad.gov.ph.)

Duque also ordered the BFAD to include in its testing those imported milk and milk-based products from China and other countries of the presence of melamine or other prohibited.

Hong Kong has also found melamine in China-made crackers and baby cereals.

Melamine poses risks of kidney stones or causing infants only if ingested in milk is consumed for several months at the rate of more than two cups a day, National Epidemiology Center director Enrique Tayag said in an interview with radio station dzMM.

The risk is lower among adults, who will only develop kidney stones from melamine if they drink more than 200 cups of contaminated milk for several months, Tayag said.

Assurance from Nestlé

In a statement, Nestlé Philippines assured consumers that products manufactured, imported, distributed and marketed by the company were safe for consumption.

It issued the statement in response to reports saying that some Nestlé products—Gerber® Cerelac Pea Soup-lic, Nestlé Choco-Flavored Ice Cream Cone, Nestlé Vanilla-Flavored Ice Cream Cone, Nestlé Vanilla-Flavored Ice Cream Bar, Bear Brand Powdered Milk Drink Mix—were being pulled out for contaminating.

Sandra Puno, Nestlé Philippines director of communications, said the six products were not sold in the Philippines. "It is possible, however, that these products have been brought to the Philippines by unauthorized importers," she said.

Nestlé Philippines said it was in full support of the BMDN efforts to test various products to determine melamine levels. It expressed confidence that the cited products, if truly from Nestlé, did not contain milk based with melamine.

The company further said raw materials for its milk products were manufactured and distributed in the Philippines came from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States.

Locally, it produces milk products under the brand names Nido, Bear Brand, Nestlae, Nestogen, Nesvita and Nestlé.

It also imports as finished goods Nan 1 from the Netherlands, Nan 2 and 3 from Switzerland, and Nan HW 1 and 2 from Germany.

"The safety of our consumers is of utmost importance to us, on once again, Nestlé Philippines would like to assure its consumers that all its milk products in the Philippines are safe for consumption," Puno said.

HK or Singapore

On radio, Sen. Manuel Roxas suggested that the BFAD conduct its test on milk and milk products from China in laboratories abroad to ensure quick results.

"They're not moving as fast as they should, the important thing is that they have already banned the import of milk products [from China]. The next thing to do is for the BFAD to check these products," Roxas said on dzMM-dzBB.

"They can do the testing in Singapore or in Hong Kong, or both. A team can put the samples in a locked suitcase and get a police escort. It's just an hour away. By afternoon they could have the results faxed to them," he said, adding:

"If [would have any way, that's how I would do it rather than wait for the equipment. They should not delay this."

Because of a clause for the BFAD to bar other food products from China for possible contamination, Health Secretary Duque said milk products had to be prioritized due to the "unprecedented capacity limitations."

Pullout

In Mandaluyong City, sanitary inspectors have ordered supermarkets in the Alabang area to take Chinese-made chocolates and candies off their shelves.

"We need the cooperation of all supermarkets in implementing the order. We will continue monitoring stores to prevent the entry of China-made milk and milk products," said Mayor Abalos Sara Benhur.

The city government urged consumers to check over for China-made milk products that might have made their way to public markets and supermarkets.

Residents may call these numbers to make their reports: 862-5660/981-2400/862-3985. With reports from Donna Bandiongan and Julis M. Arcelio

White Rabbit takes a big hit

BEIJING—THEY WERE PRIMED! DIGG! Beijing's favorite late night snack. He loved White Rabbit's candy so much he gave a hug to US President Richard Nixon during his historic visit to China. But the iconic brand, beloved by generations of Chinese, took a hit when it was linked to the tainted milk scandal.

The Shanghai-based maker of the candy said Friday it had halted production because of suspected melamine contamination. The chewy vanilla-flavored White Rabbit sweets have already been pulled from shelves around Asia and in Britain.

The Guan Sheng Yuan Co. was still warning for test results on samples of its exported products, but all sales have been stopped as a precaution, said Ge Junjie, a vice president of Bright Foods (Group) Co. Ltd., which owns the Shanghai maker.

"It's a tragedy for the Chinese food industry and a big lesson for us as it mixed the two products together," Ge said.

The popular sweets are sold in more than 80 countries throughout Asia and the world. Overseas sales have reached $100 million in the past five years.

The US Food and Drug Administration recommended Friday that consumers not eat White Rabbit candy and that retailers remove it from their shelves. It also recommended avoiding Mr. Brown instant coffee and milk tea products being recalled by Taiwan's Uni Food Industrial Co. Ltd., though it said it was not aware of any US stores in the United States linked to either the candy or the coffee and tea products.

Tests in Singapore and New Zealand this week found White Rabbit sweets were tainted with melamine, the industrial chemical that has already been found in milk and other dairy products in China. Used in making plastic and fertilizer, it has been blamed for causing kidney problems in infants and young children, sickening some 54,000 and killing four babies.

Music: Why pay when you can have it for free?

From page A1

avid buyer of music CDs, couldn't agree more. A supervising officer at a luxury watch shop, Cantoria just used to be a regular at the shops frequented by rabid music collectors. He's glad that before hard times struck, he had built quite a library.

Cell phone music

He stopped buying in 2005. He now listens to music on his cell phone where he has a considerable store of songs, all downloaded legally and paid for.

"It costs me P5 to P7 per track, so why do I have to buy a CD?" he says.

Barin and Concepcion are just two of the countless individuals who are taking advantage of the new technology—and the computer power it has spawned—that has badly shaken the global music industry.

CD sales down

Annabelle Regalado-Bonin, president of the Philippine Association of the Record Industry (Pari), says that the local music industry is seeking from declining CD sales.

Reports from Pari's 28 record companies and associate members reflect this reality. In 2007, industry sales totaled P1.2 billion; in 2008 it was P1 billion, or 17 percent lower. In 2007 it was only P780 million, or a further drop of 22 percent.

Bonin cites three reasons for this downward trend: A marked decrease in consumers' disposable income; widespread piracy through CD burning; and digital sales (music purchased through legitimate Internet sites).

Ronald Arzaga is the president of Flipmusic, a legit, locally operated digital downloading website which claims to have the biggest library of music licensed from major international labels, independents and artists. It offers some 160,000 songs, several hundred music videos, movies and "podcasts" available for purchase through the Internet.

Internet users

Flipmusic has two sites—Flipmusic.net, which sells local music, and flipmusicUSA.net, which retails international it. Also, recently, it launched FlipmusicLITE, an app which sells music for downloading to mobile phones.

Arzaga says an average of 30,000 Internet users visit the two sites daily...though not everyone makes a purchase—and that "85 percent of Flipmusic revenues come from overseas Filipinos.

But he observes that the Philippines and other benchmark Asian countries have yet to be fully acquainted with online music purchases.

"I think it's due to the combination of piracy in the region, both from the manufacturing side and reselling of music products," he says.

"But the region is certainly not behind in terms of technology and I believe it will eventually catch on to the trend few years."

Downloading stations

The latest trend, according to some enthusiasts, is buying music from legal digital downloading stations in the malls.

Mendiola Pix is the technical director and head of digital media at Pixchess, a telecommunications retail shop with 50 branches at the SM, Ayala, Robinsons, Rustan Mart and Gaisano malls nationwide.

Aside from selling cell phones, video and digital cameras, computer laptops, MP3 players and other gadgets, Pixchess has also jumped into the digital downloading bandwagon.

He says that Wellcom is licensed to sell music, unlike the illegal downloading and CD-burning kiosks that have proliferated in many corners of the metropolis, including a few malls.

"We just finished a two-month trial run and the record labels are happy with the results," notes Pix.

Benz Solis, managing director of D&M Records, confirms this. He says the songs of the labels artists, like Jolina Magdangal and Boy2 Quizon, are enjoying brisk sales "on a daily basis."

He says Pixchess's clientele is mainly from the 26 to 35 age bracket. One factor that draws people to Pixchess, he adds, is convenience...especially for those without Internet access at home.

"It's just like buying load for their cellphone," he says.

Concert scene: So far, so good

A concert promoter admits that, with the recent upsurge in international and local artists, already lower people are now searching for music performances.

The irony is that more artists have been coming to the Philippines recently, says Ernest Silverio, who is more popularly known as PIP, nickname DJ Steve O'Neil of EC 108.

"There are weeks when four to five artists are scheduled to perform," he says.

Antecedo, a concert promoter who belongs to foreign acts who perform for 20-year-old and above audiences, says that promoters were cautious last year because 2008 was a "disaster year." Many foreign acts were staged and not all made money because the industry seemed to experience "concert fatigue."

"But this year is like 2006 all over again, with concerts left and right, despite the flight [gas and food] crisis," he says.

The reasons for the apparent lull-set, according to Santonia, is that concerts are booked well ahead of time, at least two years in advance for some.

2007 a good year

"Since 2007 was a good year, the promoters who made money booked more artists for 2008," he says.

According to Santonia, his own company "registered great attendance in 2008, did very badly in 2008, improved in 2007, and so far, so good in 2008."

Although his market is mostly the upper middle to upper socioeconomic brackets, Santonia says he is aware of the situation for the masses who might also be interested in patronizing these concerts.

"Before the gas crisis, I could sell an average of 10 to 50 tickets a day. Nowadays, I'd be lucky to sell 10. I think people would rather hang out in their money and foreign luxuries like watching concerts," he says.

Sufficient motivation

Yet, Santonia also believes that if people really like an artist, they will buy concert tickets, regardless of the economic situation.

Barin, the music fan, agrees that with sufficient motivation, people will pay for music.

"They will buy tickets—with cash or credit card, or with money borrowed or given by their parents. Or they will join raffle contests for free tickets. There's no such thing as right or wrong timing in the Filipino's passion for concert music rate is not extra," she says.

Oldest senator JPE wants more rigorous sked back

By Dona Pazdigan

AT 84, HE MAY BE the oldest member of the Senate, but Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile continues to prove he is indefatigable.

In a privilege speech last week, he urged his colleagues to return to the upper chamber's old four-day session schedule, complaining that they did not have enough time to debate proposed legislation.

Enrile said the senators had little time to do their legislative duties because of the current three-day schedule, which runs from Monday to Wednesday.

Sessions should start at 3 p.m., but they usually start at close to 4 p.m., he said. He reminded his colleagues that during the 6th Congress, the Senate held sessions from Monday to Friday.

While the senators agreed among themselves that they could hold sessions on Thursday should the need arise, Enrile said they had avoided holding sessions on Thursday altogether.

The three-day session schedule was also adopted during the term of Senate President Franklin Drilon, the predecessor of current Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., "ostensibly to conserve on power."

"There is no doubt that we need to accommodate more than two, but three days a week is too short to tackle our most important duty which is to craft legislation," Enrile told his colleagues.

"There is so much work and so little time to do it in," he said.

Enrile chairs the powerful finance committee which is overseeing the ongoing hearings on the budgets of various government agencies in the 2009 national budget.

On Monday, he will open the investigation into the "double entry" in the 2008 national budget to which Sen. Ferdie Lacson accused Villar of benefiting from two P500 million outlays for the C-5 road extension project.

New role for Miriam: Construction chief

WITH ALMOST ALL THE SENATORS IN favor of the plan to put up a new Senate building, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has volunteered to head an ad hoc body that would supervise the construction.

Santiago, vice chair of the Senate committee on finance, told Senate President Manuel Villar the was ideal for the project since she had no plans of running for reelection in 2013.

Nearly all the senators are in agreement that the Senate should have its own building.

The building it is managing in Pasay City is actually owned by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), which charges a monthly rental of P7.75 million.

The Senate pays another P500,000 in rent pending repair, bringing the total monthly rent it pays GSIS to P8.25 million, or around P100 million a year.

"But does not include the rent for the satellite offices of some senators which amounts to an additional P500,000 a month.

"Considering all these expenses, it would be reasonable to explore the feasibility of constructing a new Senate building," Santiago wrote Villar.

Although the senators had different ideas on where a new Senate building should be located, they agreed it should be somewhere near the House of Representatives in Quezon City.

Dona Pazdigan

Dr. Zosimo P. Ermac; 70

DR. ZOSIMO P. ERMAC, A PROMINENT Davao City surgeon, died on Sept. 20 while recuperating in Hong Kong with his wife Nora Tiongco-Ermac, three of their four children and eight of their 12 grandchildren. He was 70.

He was one of the pioneering surgeons of Davao City and was former chair of the department of surgery at San Pedro Hospital, Davao City. He was a fellow of the Philippine College of Surgeons and a former faculty member at the Davao Medical School Foundation.

Ermac is survived by his wife Nora; children Zosimo "Peng" and Hermenegildo "Geo" Gabucan, Ede Jude and Johanne Warren Milo and Alade Angeli; and Bryan Joseph and Lyneric; and 12 grandchildren led by the eldest, Andrea Lauren Gabucan.

His visitation wrote to active at 10 p.m. last night. The wake will be at Torre Chapel of the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, Cantos Street, Davao City. Interment will be on Oct. 2 at the Davao Memorial Park.

GMA has praises for 'Mamang Pulis'

THE OUTGOING CHIEF OF the Philippine National Police established programs to allow the PNP to regain the public trust, according to President Maningning Aquino.

As yesterday's turnover ceremonies, Mr Aquino praised Director General Jesus Ramon Esmeralda Ramos for following her directive to him to uphold human rights and for his efforts in "demoblood" police personnel from officers into the streets.

He also said Ramos started his term at the PNP with "three big hangs" – the explosion at Glorietta 2 in Makati on Oct. 19, 2007, the bombing of the Batasan Complex a month later on Nov. 14, and the short-lived rebel takeover of Peninsula Manila days later on Nov. 26 ... but sustained those challenges.

Ramos was installed as the 18th PNP chief on Oct. 1, 2007, with Mr Aquino's directives that the police force sanitize the anti-crime campaign, aim over insurgents, and restore its image as a defender of human rights and civil liberties.

Under his watch, the PNP managed to significantly accomplish those tasks.

New mindset

Ramos has logged 34 years of public service.

Those years are highlighted by the development of a new mindset among the men and women of the PNP—the "Maka-tao Pulis" and "Kiting Pulis"—to better serve and protect the community despite the challenges that ruined the core values of "service, honor and justice."

His 12-month tour of duty as PNP chief was marked not only by the "three big hangs" but also by the supposed kidnapping of Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada, the former's principal witness in the NBN-ZTE controversy in Pampanga.

The PNP said in a statement that in just "managed to handle each of those situations, on top of the routine prosecution of addressing public safety and law enforcement issues."

It said it also "became all the more inspired to implement reform programs aimed at achieving Level re-quirements to even changing demands on peace and order."

Reforms

"At the same time, the PNP endeavored to become a dependable, approachable, personable, humane and God-fearing police force," it added.

But the PNP statement, the reforms in the police force involved, among others:

- Manpower reallocation from headquarters to the streets, resulting in an increased number of patrol and checkpoint operations, a steady police presence in the localities, and a decrease in crime volume by 0.81 percent and street crime volume by 14.39 percent.
- Reorganization of a substantial share of municipal resources to the field, including acquiring additional patrol cars and firearms, thus adding each to police units in the fight against criminality, insurgency and terrorism.
- Redeployment to selected short-range police operations of obsolete patrol vehicles in line with the PNP's strategy conservation campaign.
- Intensification of community empowerment endeavors nationwide, such as the Model Police Station Project.
- Activation of Women and Children Protection Centers in all police offices to address women and children in situations of domestic violence, human trafficking and other forms of abuse.
- Intensive use of intensive technology, which guarantees confidentiality in obtaining sensitive information from the general public.

Human rights

What the PNP considers to be reforms program is "a retooling and redefinition of themselves as staunch advocates of human rights."

It said the creation of its Human Rights Affairs Office emphasized the PNP's incorporation of human rights classes considered by men and women in the service, whether within and outside their assignments.

All uniformed personnel had to undergo intensive human rights training, to complement other seminars geared at strengthening their moral and spiritual foundations.

In Camp Crame, commanders and chiefs of offices took Rich Warren's "Purpose-Driven Life" seminars, and are now exposed to "set-line examples to troopers and subordinates," the PNP said.

For all that, the PNP said, "the subs of 'Mamang Pulis' and 'Kiting Pulis' did not go unnoticed."

It said its members' welfare had been "given top priority" in terms of housing programs, educational benefits, medical and legal assistance, and livelihood projects.

CHR to keep eye on new PNP chief

By Alcuin Papa

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights said it would "keep an eye" on the newly installed chief of the Philippine National Police, Deputy Director General Jesus Verzosa, to make sure his programs would continue to promote human rights.

Speaking with reporters after the change of command ceremony in Camp Crame yesterday, CHR Chair Leila de Lima said she hoped Verzosa would continue the human rights programs of his predecessor, Director General Jesus Ramos.

De Lima said she would like to see Verzosa as "human rights-conscious" as Ramos.

"We'd like to see that. It remains to be seen. We will monitor his performance and activities," she said.

According to De Lima, the PNP's human rights record "needs improvement," especially after the purported release of more suspected involvement in the bloody RIDC bank robbery in May.

The PNP had insisted that the killings in Ilocos are connected to aggressive operation against suspects. But De Lima had said otherwise.

Citing a report issued by the CHR, the families of those killed have filed cases against the policemen involved in the operation.

But De Lima noted yesterday that there had been "a sharp decline" in extrajudicial killings during Ramos's month. Nevertheless, she said, her agency was still receiving reports of incidents of torture, arbitrary detention and arbitrary arrest involving policemen.

"We know that the human rights office of the PNP is very active in terms of education programs. We hope the new leadership will prioritize further investment movement and promotion of human rights," De Lima said.

In his farewell speech, Ramos said a total of 1,626 human rights cases were formed in police stations nationwide during his term as PNP chief.

Activist of '70s now chief of PNP

From page A-1

with a checklist.

He graduated from the PMA in 1978. He ranks 1st amongst 1,120 members of the 120,000-strong national police force.

Marching order

President Maningning Aquino's first marching order to Verzosa, 54, is to help in her administration's initiative in bringing peace to the troubled South.

Verzosa has previously been assigned in Basilan and Maguindanao, provinces where the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the bandit group Abu Sayyaf are known to operate.

In her speech during yesterday's turnover ceremony at Camp Crame, the President said Verzosa had the experience "valuable to relate to are seeking to do so—that is, to do everything possible to bring lasting peace in Mindanao and end 40 years of fighting that has killed more than 120,000 people."

Ms Aquino also reminded her administration's goal to pursue the unified peace process to Mindanao.

"We are committed to end the violence that has held the southern part of our country back," she said.

The President also said the reported plot PNP under Verzosa to play "a very strong role" in enforcing "disinformation, demobilization and rehabilitation" in certain parts of Mindanao, where government troops are battling Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commander Ameril Umbra Kato, Abdullah Macapaar alias Bravo and Moron Sulaiman Pangalian, who led deadly attacks against civilians in August.

"After all," the current operations against the renegade MILF commanders are "a law enforcement exercise, not an all-out war," she said.

Maximize deployment

At a press conference later yesterday, Verzosa said he would order more police resources and personnel to Mindanao.

He said that in order to maximize the deployment, he would advocate the formation of an interim police group that would integrate various regions in certain areas, similar to the area commands of the Armed Forces.

He promised to spend time talking with Gen. Alexander Yano, the AFP chief of staff and his classmate at the PMA, on how to solve the problems in Mindanao.

Jogging interviews

"We are going to be jogging and talking together on Mindanao. He is also a Bonna buff like me," Verzosa said.

He invited reporters to jog with him every morning, saying these sessions would be open for interviews.

In his assumption speech, Verzosa said he would make "effective leadership" a way of life in the police force.

This, he said, would make the delivery of police services more effective and PNP commanders less dependent on national headquarters.

Verzosa also promised to be a hands-on leader and to spend more time visiting police stations in the field.

"We shall develop leaders at all levels. And I shall lead those leaders ... We shall let the ground running by enhancing police services where they matter most," he said.

High-profile cases

Verzosa's star rose quickly when he joined the PNP where he is known as a tenacious investigator and an intelligent aspect.

He has gone up against urban terrorists, robbery gangs and kidnap-for-ransom groups.

Verzosa has held vital positions in the PNP, including commander of Region IV-A (Calabarzon, considered a hotbed of crime syndicates), the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (of CIDG, the prosecutor investigation unit), and the Intelligence Group (of IG, the counter-intelligence unit).

As CIDG chief, he led operations against terrorists and ranking members of insurgent groups like the New People's Army.

As Region IV-A commander, Verzosa and his team cracked the rape case that led to the arrest and prosecution of then Mayor Antonio Sanchez of Calauan, Laguna.

Among the many sensational cases he has handled as CIDG chief is the murder of actress Nida Blanca.

As IG chief, Verzosa directed operations that led to the arrest of terrorists Rafael Bolasco Al-Ghozi and Muddy.

He has also brought down crime groups like the Ampatuan Drug ring and the Vitalez kidnap-for-ransom gang.

Critics already

But this early, Verzosa has had his share of criticism.

Cause-oriented groups have raised his involvement in the "salvaging" of several Left to its later years, and challenged him to improve the PNP's human rights record.

To this, Verzosa said: "We already have a human rights program existing and we have plans of strengthening it. We are closely coordinating with Commission on Human Rights Chief Leila de Lima."

He said the PNP had also banned the practice of making a public pronouncement of suspects "who are considered innocent until proven guilty by a court," and had established its own Human Rights Affairs Office.

As for the escape of Al-Ghozi from a detention cell in Camp Crame in 2003, Verzosa had this to say: "I gave up my position as IG-chief to give way to an impartial investigation by a Chel-Rolling body headed by Sedfrey Ordoñez. I was exonerated."

He said he led efforts to recapture Al-Ghozi, but "unluckily," the man was killed.

Eye-opener

But Al-Ghozi's escape was an eye-opener for Verzosa that led him to discover the "dysfunction" in the PNP system: "I saw the many sizes of our jails and buildings, and procedural lapses."

Al-Ghozi's escape resulted in the formation of the PNP Reform Commission, which made a study on the dysfunction that Verzosa saw.

That, combined with the 2004 UN Development Program study of the police force, led to the establishment of the PNP's Transformation Program and its implementing arm, the Program Management Office.

"The Al-Ghozi incident became a spring board for further reforms in the PNP. I guess you can say it was providential," Verzosa said.

Managerial training

As PNP chief, Verzosa intends to make the force more efficient by training all 1,600 chiefs of police, 80 provincial commanders and 17 regional commanders to become managers.

"That will be our main agenda, to implement our program of building leadership from the chiefs of police up. That is what we lack in related crime prone areas and in places with an insurgency problem," he said.

According to Verzosa, leadership at the top will result in efficiency. And a more efficient and better led police force will be capable of bringing down the crime rate and improving its service to the people.

"All commanders will be accountable and responsible for the anti-crime campaign in their areas," he said.

Verzosa is convinced that winning in management will allow commanders to link up with other stakeholders in the community to help in the prevention and subdue of crimes in their areas.

The focus on management is the crux of the PNP's Transformation Program, which Verzosa spearheaded during his term as deputy chief for administration, the PNP's second highest post.

He also headed the Program Management Office.

To the max

"This time, as PNP chief, we will implement the transformation program to the max," Verzosa said.

He said the program would make every police chief and unit commander an effective manager, and all the members of the force "more and women of integrity and self-sacrifice."

Verzosa also said he would push for the modernization program started by his predecessor, Avelino Razon.

Armed with a P10-billion fund from the President, the PNP aims to improve and modernize its "C" (communications and investigative) capability, he said.

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OPINION

A posthumous concern

EDITORIAL

VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES in the Far East (Usaffe) have at home and in America thought that, at long last, the US Congress was poised to pass legislation addressing their generations-old claim for benefits. But as the American economy unraveled, politicians began nitpicking at the bills (pending before the US Congress) aimed at increasing the benefits of Filipino veterans. Filipino-American veterans' groups and lobbyists began to fear that the promise to bring the bill to a vote in the US House of Representatives would fall by the wayside. No one, of course, predicted that the US Congress would be plunged into a crisis atmosphere by US President George W. Bush's proposed bailout, which the US Senate and House Democrats have agreed to, but whose approval has been delayed and, possibly, foiled by a group of House Republicans-motions they will be defeated in November if they vote for a bailout.

Filipino veterans, as we've pointed out, have spent 60 years begging the US Congress to restore the benefits taken away from them. Their benefits have been restored, to dribbles, and under conditions no self-respecting American veteran would even be asked: Foremost among the requirements being adopting US citizenship. If Filipino veterans feared wholesale exclusion from the benefits given GIs, then the refusal of the US government to consider revoking the Recission Act points to a kind of legislated Jim Crow for Filipino veterans. They would, in small increments, approach—but never achieve—equality.

Ironically, the slow but steady migration of Filipino veterans to the United States has not created a formidable enough constituency to demand action from American legislators. In recent months, lobbyists focused on US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, asking her to exercise leadership in her chamber by holding a vote. But relying on Pelosi ignores the reality that the US House is a mosaic of special interests, and Fil-Am veterans seem incapable of mustering the clout required to push things to a vote. And now, with a grand showdown in the US Congress—a showdown that's being proclaimed a make-or-break moment for the future of American capitalism—the fate of the dwindling ranks of Usaffe veterans won't merit attention.

The truism, of course, was mentioned by Sen. John McCain during his recent debate with fellow Sen. Barack Obama. Since the United States invaded Iraq, there has been a scandal involving the reconstruction—poor funding, incompetent management, and so on—of American veterans of the previous conflict. The entire veterans' administration bureaucracy has been taken to task as ruthless, cache-handed, mismanaged and a general scandal to behold. Yet any improvements—and McCain has simply proposed putting a freeze on most US government expenses except for a few exceptions, in which he includes veterans' benefits—would again be aimed at American citizens and leave the relics of World War II in the Philippines by the wayside.

All the tireless lobbyists working for Fil-Am veterans' benefits know that they were getting crumbs while the US government struggled to wiggle out of its historic and moral obligations to the Philippine Army soldiers drafted to serve under the Allied colors.

A tactical approach to securing benefits by a concession here and an inclusion there, while sidestepping the moral nature of the whole controversy, seemed poised to pay off last year and earlier this year. Now, all that has started to recede. The blunt, harsh, tragic reality is that never did our veterans come close to a substantive recognition of their rights, as they did over the past years, and never have they been further away from it as they are now.

This means veterans may have to come to terms with the bitter reality that some have been luckier than others but most will go to their graves with a raw deal from the Philippine and American governments. The fight will mean enough, simply by attrition, for their children's and grandchildren's fight; what moral victory the veterans obtain will come too late. The veterans will eternally be the grim, gaunt, hurting bastards of Bataan—"no Mariveles, no Pepsi, and no Uncle Sam."

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The aerial oppressors are back

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

OVER THESE SHORT YEARS, I HAVE WRITTEN as many as 15 times in this column against the obnoxious noise caused by the noisemaking airplanes flying directly over Mariville Park, where I and other oppressed persons reside, including many young children. The last time I complained was some two years ago when the head of the Air Transportation Office saw no question ably to explain what they were doing to address our problem. He promised he would try his best to relieve us of the inconvenience we have been suffering since the administration of President Fidel Ramos and up to this time under the Aquino regime.

Now I am here again with my usual gripe against the Air Transportation Office and its fellow travelers that seem insensitive to the plight of the sun and quiet that are part of our human right to privacy in our own homes that they are wantonly violating.

I should mention that despite the ineffectiveness of Malacañang's many members of Congress have sympathized with us and expressed their official assistance to relieve our ill troubles from the obtrusive airplanes. In 2002, Sen. Loren Legarda whom I did not even know at that time arranged a luncheon conference between me and the ATO chief then who first tacitly dismissed my complaint as "music and sentiment" but changed his attitude when he realized I was not cowed by retired generals doing sloppy civilian jobs. He promised to help us, but nothing happened and Loren's generous intervention was wasted.

Sen. Manuel Villar, who is from the neighboring Las Piñas City, introduced a bill regulating the noise of airliner operating near residential villages but that was the last I heard about it. Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Serge Osmeña III also expressed their concern. Representatives Rodolfo Fariñas and Ricardo Dalmacio of Marikina City both called for a legislative investigation of our problem but nothing came out of their token demands except a few years from some of their deluded constituents.

Sen. Jinkee Pacquiao, chair of the committee on public service, environment and natural resources, and Sen. Alfredo Lim were main aggressive in their investigation of the airliner that affected nearby centers for the offenses they were committing against the residents of Mariville Park. They said they could not transfer their takeoff and landing operations to the airport being used by PAL because they would have to contend with more aviation jam. Installing the necessary built-in was also impractical because it would cost three a million pesos per airplane.

They later partially complied with the noise abatement requirement but not with their own promise to limit their flights over Mariville Park only from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily, including Sunday, except in cases then unforeseen or urgent emergency outside of those reserved hours. They have flagrantly ignored the voluntary commitment, to the special prejudice of infants awakened during the early morning hours, young students during their daytime classes, and adults quietly recovering.

When still a television figure before he became a senator politician, Vice President Binay (sorry: conducted a program on our airplane noise problem. It was attended by hearing experts and many residents from Mariville Park led by Jessica Aguirre, who was the most active campaigner against the offending airliners until her demise in 2006. The experts declared that they had held tests on the noise we were complaining about and found that it was especially deleterious to the children.

I don't know if De Castro ever acted officially on his findings as a popular investigator when he became a senator and even now that he is the honorable presiding officer in addition to being a Cabinet member.

The lesson I am presenting again is the failure of the government, particularly the Air Transportation Office, to uphold its assurance to our friends in the Senate that it would address our problem by flying over a community only during the scheduled hours voluntarily specified by the airlines themselves. The intrusions have increased not only in number but even in volume, as if the ATO has become even more accommodating to the arrogant airlines.

Senator Arroyo may remember how he called me up one morning on a different matter and our conversation was interrupted by a noisy airplane insolently flying overhead. That was one time I welcomed that rude intrusion because it proved to my lawyer friend that we in Mariville are not only imagining our grievances.

I am writing this outpatient at a private airport because our village association does not seem to have all that noise even when its meetings are held in our area of the village where the intolerable racket is the loudest. The ATO should have suspected that it had not received any official protest from me based regarding the trouble, suggesting that its commitment must only be exasperating.

If our subdivision officials have done nothing on our behalf, it must be because they are afraid to offend the airlines that are the source of their income, which has encouraged the airlines to continue with their excesses with the benign permission of the ATO. I have again chosen to act as a voluntary spokesman pioneer for the benefit of Mariville Park.

If the Senate cannot help us on this simple matter, I do not see how it can resist the Cha-cha dreamboogie and the "peace" pretenses of the MILF.

Promise?

MOMENTS

Fr Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A HUSBAND WHO came back to his doctor and said: "Mild doctor, you sure kept your promise. You said I'd be walking after a month, and you were right. I had to sell my car to pay your bill."

In today's Gospel (Mk. 11, 28-32), Jesus relates the story of two sons who were asked by their father to go out and work in the vineyard. One said no, but later on worked in the vineyard, while the other said yes, but did not go. The first one did not promise, but delivered, while the other promised, but did not. It's not what we say or what we profess, but what we do that matters. It is not lip service, but service that really counts.

There is a tendency for us three-time to be label-conscious. We put a lot of value to tags and brands, and perhaps rightly so. However, the Lord reminds us to see not just the externals. God invites us to go "the extra mile" in our dealings with people. For indeed, "what is essential is invisible to the eye."

Today, it would be good for all of us to reflect on the promises we have made to God, to others and to ourselves. If we have been faithful in those promises, then let us praise God for his grace. If we have broken our promises, then let us turn to God in sorrow and renew them. Instead of being burdened by our broken vows, let us try again, and move on somehow.

Our government officials and our elected leaders (many of whom are members of our parishes—they will serve the public and that they will do their very best to serve the common good. Today, we rejoice them to remember and make true their promise to God and to our people.

Likewise, we church and religious people made a solemn vow to God to serve Him and His people. We too bear our bruises today and suppose our Filipino missionaries "out there" while we do our mission "at here," especially in October, the month for the missions.

October no. is the month of the Holy Rosary. Let us continue to hold our Blessed Mother's hands. She loves each one of us without conditions. Please join us for the "Walk with God to Mamitay" this Oct. 6, Saturday, starting at 6 a.m. from the Ugandeta City Cathedral. Stay close to Mama Mary, and you will not abandon Jesus.

Join us on Oct. 1, Wednesday, Feast of St. Therese, patroness of the missions. We are launching in the 6 p.m. Mass, at the Shrine of the Divine Heart, Christ the King Seminary, our (1) titled "Oh! Jesus, Intercede (L)" a second collection of stories, jokes and anecdotes. Please consider it for your Christmas gift or giveaway, and help our missionaries.

Whatever pleases the Father, whatever benefits others, and whatever elevates the senses—this is my prayer, my promise and my challenge at 55. To God be the glory; to others, His grace and blessing; and to me, oh Lord, your mercy. Amen.

Fr. Nelson Calanoy, SSSH, parish priest of Sta. Teresita del Niño Jesus, Pasay, Metro Manila (SSSH), invites everyone to a musical play titled "Tres-ures" in line with the celebration of the Feast Day of St. Therese of the Child Jesus on Oct. 1. The play, organized by the Cultural Committee of Sta. Teresita parish in cooperation with SAMA, Theatre Arts Guild and Shop-Out Makiat, will run from Oct. 1-7 at the University of Makati Grand Theatre. For more details, call 09178982048 or 09282221073 or email sanchezjoseph@yahoo.com or www.jesusinternal.multiply.com.

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to be true and faithful to my promises to you, to others and to myself. Amen.

Vigilance, not anxiety

LAST WEEK'S COLUMN ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY of martial law triggered fresh memories of those perilous years. After all, Ferdinand Marcos imposed it 13 months before his term was to end on Dec. 30, 1972. With only 21 months left of President Macapagal-Arroyo's term, many have asked, "What are the chances of relieving martial law in our country?"

Anxiety over martial rule. To begin with, martial law is not yet in force. It is a legitimate power granted by our Constitution to the president to enable him or her to suppress an "invasion or rebellion." It may be used only "when the public safety requires it." It may be invoked only by the president (not by the Senate), when the very life of the nation is on the line.

The president initially determines the necessity of imposing it for a maximum of 60 days. Within 48 hours, he or she is required to report in person or in writing to Congress, which by vote of a majority of all its members, "voting jointly," may revoke or extend it "for a period to be determined by Congress, if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and the public safety requires it." As a further safeguard, the Supreme Court is authorized to review (and decide within 30 days") "the sufficiency of the factual basis of the proclamation." Thus, the president may override the president and Congress, if it finds the legal ground and the moral courage.

All in all, the present Constitution gives the president sufficient authority to defend the nation during a real military crisis, and at the same time, safeguards the individual rights of citizens to liberty, security, free and full participation in democratic exercise. The problem arises when this awesome power is misused or abused to advance a private agenda as Ferdinand Marcos did in 1972 to extend his term. However theoretically sound the safeguards are, they would be unavailing if Congress and the Supreme Court fail to use them properly and honestly.

Anxiety over Congress and the Court. Really sensitive over martial law gross out of the fear that both Congress and the Court may not stand

WITH DUE RESPECT
Antonio V. Pangalangan

up against an iron fist. If the House of Representatives could not gather one-third of its members to impeach the President...can it be called upon to invoke a supposed martial law ruler who swaggers with guns and gold to enforce obedience?

If the Supreme Court was unwilling—despite the well-reasoned contrary opinion of its third—to compel Ramon Mitra to answer three questions that might implicate GMA to the 500,000 cases, can the people expect it to exercise a martial law proclamation backed up by bayonets and tanks?

To be fair, anxiety has not been deepened up to now (1) IMO partisans. It was Charter change. They tried it in 2006 with an unsuccessful people's initiative to install the parliamentary system. Again, a people's initiative is not per se bad. In fact, it is the most democratic manifestation of people power.

Thus, when ordinary citizens move to change specific constitutional provisions that their representatives are not willing to do, the people need not search folks overseas. They could bypass Congress and directly amend the Charter. The problem two years ago was that the politicians rammed initiative by availing of a loophole, instead of using the methods given them, which are the constituent assembly (Con-ass) and the constitutional convention (Con-con).

Anxiety over the Ora-dha. After being rebuffed by the Supreme Court, DHDs deserters have now turned to the Con-ass. But with an incompetent Senate and a hostile media, they have not made enough inroads. According to Majority Leader Arthur Defensor, the House is overwhelmingly pro-Con-ass. (1) should the two chambers of Congress meet jointly or separately? and (2) should they vote jointly or separately? He asserted that the Supreme Court must first resolve these issues before Congress could move on.

If Congress is still stymied by these questions by the end of October, it may not have enough time for the Con-ass because it will be busy primed by its presidentiables [Senators Estrada, Defensor, Roco, etc.] and its All-Saints' Day and Christmas breaks.

Does GMA have other options to extend her reign? Yes, an incumbent president has many options. Sometime ago, her doctrinal lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, floated the idea of an appointive Congress, a one-house body of all its members," without saying whether the vote would be joint or separate. Thus, the same two questions on the Con-ass also befuddle the Con-con.

Another is emergency rule (paternity). Devoid of any constitutional power, a naked power grab in very clear, it would lead to a revolving door. Media is the crown that rests on laurels.

Because of the difficulty of revising the Constitution and the inherent dangers of emergency rule, GMA may be tempted to try "unconventional authoritarianism," instead of a benign Congress and a "pacified" Supreme Court. She may tolerate martial law and suppress habeas corpus. She could thereafter call a Con-ass (or a Con-con) and rewrite, in turn, produce a new Constitution to legitimize her continued reign.

Do our people have enough to be anxious? No, but they have all the more reason to be vigilant. Indeed, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

* * *

Comments are welcome at chieljustice@pangalangan.ph/@hotmail.com

Envoys for the earth

AT LARGE
Rina Jimenez-David

SET TEN: A UNIVERSITY TO BAN STYROFOAM packaging as a matter of policy and to host a regular recycling fair with the proceeds going to a scholarship fund. Creating a master community in a coastal barangay of Puerto Princesa in Palawan, with a view to banning it before our children's graduation. Using dance drama to create environmental awareness among both the young performers and their audiences. And recycling agricultural waste like banana and sorghum stalks and bamboo scraps for use in mushroom propagation and the production of handicraft and furniture.

These are the four winning projects of the first-ever Young Environmental Envoys (YEES), chosen from among 11 finalists, all of them college students from all over the country. The final 11 distended both the feasibility and worth of their projects to the point where they had accomplished in three months' time.

The four winners will join other young people from the rest of Asia and the Pacific in a study tour of Germany to observe private and government initiatives on climate change mitigation and environmental protection, as well as participate in a youth forum as well as holding up "ind bolcano. It may be safe to say, then, that even if they don't make it to Germany, the finalists would have gained enough knowledge and experience to bankstop their commitment to the environment.

Perhaps I'm cynical in this belief, but at least it is a lifelong awareness of the need to do one's part, however small, in saving the Earth.

* * *

NICOLE Villarejo parlayed the influence she wielded as her alma mater of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas campus, convincing students to bring their cases or unable food contributions to school, and commissioners to adopt the use of "Styrofoam," which is made

up largely of carnauba and other bio-degradable materials. Since "styrofoam" is more expensive than others plates and packaging, students would need to shell out an additional P5 for it. But so far, says Nicole, the policy has gone a long way toward reducing La Salle's monthly output of 1,000 bags of garbage.

At the same time, a regular recyclables fair has organized around P60,000 from the sale of recyclable materials, most of which was contributed by faculty members disposing of test papers, exam booklets and the like. The money generated will be used for the "Ono La Salle" scholarship program. Most long term is the ingredient of the environment officer into the curriculum, with talks with administration and faculty members starting.

While Nicole's project was focused on campus affairs, Nickie Sodeo of the University of Indeed hosted her eighth in Barangay Biking in Barangay Ilaya, Puerto Princesa, Palawan, with chieftman. Noting that fishermen have reported dwindling catches in the area, Nickie resolved to create a marine sanctuary in the coastal barangay, eventually having a memorandum of agreement signed with the barangay council. Coastal clean-ups will be observed as well as promotional and regional activities and NGOs. Nickie now manages the sanctuary with the help of volunteers and paid guards, though she says they saved the help of lawyers to handle potential law suits.

* * *

JOSEPH D. Grapilo, a student of Marinos Marcos State University, observed that the common practice among farmers was to burn agricultural waste, which was not only wasteful but also posed a threat to the environment and the health of residents.

Working with Sangguniang Kabataan officers and cooperatives, he set up a program to teach farmers the use of the agricultural wastes material as a medium for both mushroom growing and as bedding for cow in farming paper. Potentially, he said, income from both the mushroom and paper could mean an annual profit of about P1 million.

Jessmel Garcia, a student of Sitio Tharyan State University, chose to use his talent and his experience in dance theater to train high school students in his native Kalibo, Aklan to stage performances on environmental issues in the province. So far, more than a thousand students in four high schools and elementary schools have watched the performances, their understanding of the messages noted through evaluation forms distributed at the end of each performance.

* * *

THESE may have been the best projects submitted by the juries, who included "Mother Earth" convenor Gilette Abesamis, Lisa Ansonio of the Philippine Business for the Environment, Jesus Lemen of the Environmental Management Bureau and Dr. Angel Alcala of the Department of Science and Technology, who chaired the panel, and myself.

But overall, we were impressed by the quality not just of the presentations but of the projects themselves, which showed a keen understanding of the local environment and its resources and creativity that only the young can tap into. One of these projects, proposed by Richard Dennis Supan of Zamboga, Isabela, involved the use of shells dust as an essential ingredient in the creation of art paint, which was then used to produce a colorful art work about the environment, schoolchildren. My childhood red head what would happen if the "chalkdust art paint" were to be adopted by the Department of Education for use in public schools nationwide. Wouldn't that mean great savings for the educational system annually? One thing about students nowadays is the FIRE in the eyes, a fervor that comes with anticipating the future that awaits not just the finalists but the country and the rest of the world, given the young people's passion and commitment.

No blank check for Paulson

WORLD VIEW
George Soros

NEW YORK—U.S. TREASURY SECRETARY HANK Paulson's $700-billion rescue package has run into difficulty on Capitol Hill. Rightly so: it is ill-conceived. Congress would be abdicating its responsibility if it gave the Treasury secretary a blank check. The bill submitted to Congress runs four language to it that would exempt the secretary's decisions from review by any court or administrative agency...the ultimate fulfillment of the Bush administration's dream of a unitary executive.

Problems in financial markets and the credit crunch necessary to give him discretion over $700 billion. His actions last week brought on the crisis that makes rescue necessary. On Monday he allowed Lehman Brothers to fail and refused to make governmental funds available to prevent it. On Tuesday he had to rescue insurance giant provide an $85-billion loan to AIG in exchange terms.

The demise of Lehman disrupted the commercial paper market. A large money market fund "broke the buck" and investment banks that relied on the commercial paper market had difficulty in financing their operations. By Thursday it was on money market funds was in full swing and we came to close to a meltdown as at any time since the 1930s. Paulson reversed again and proposed a government rescue.

Paulson had gotten a blank check from Congress once before. That was to deal with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. His solution handed the housing market in the name of all middle class homeowners know that if the blank checks were filled out they would lose their jobs, so they reviewed and investigated every expenditure and item available. Politicians few weeks later handed Secretary Paulson's hand and he had to take them back.

Paulson's proposal to purchase distressed mortgage-related securities runs counter to a system of asymmetric information. The securities are hard to value but the officials know more about them than the buyer: in any auction process the Treasury would end up with the dregs. The proposal to give rich-with-limit conflict of interest issues. Unless the Treasury overpaid for the securities, the scheme would not bring relief. But if the scheme is used to bail out insolvent banks, what will the taxpayers get in return?

Barack Obama has outlined four conditions that ought to be imposed—an upside for the taxpayers as well as downside, a high degree of transparency, limitations on executive compensation and golden parachutes. Help for homeowners as well as the holders of the mortgages, and some limits on the compensation of those who benefit from taxpayers' money. These are the right principles. They could be applied more effectively if the Treasury bought securities that are less dictated by distressed securities directly rather than by removing them of the distressed securities.

The injection of government funds would be much less problematic if it were applied to the equity rather than the liabilities of the banks. A system in preferred stock with warrants must be sufficient to make up the hole created by the housing of the housing bubble. By contrast, the $700 billion of $700 billion or the demand side may not be sufficient to arrest the decline of housing prices. Something also needs to be done on the supply side. To prevent housing prices from overshooting on the downside, the number of foreclosures has to be kept to a minimum. The terms of mortgages need to be adjusted to the homeowners' ability to pay.

The rescue package leaves this task undone. Making the economic recalibration is a delicate and time-consuming process. Many individual mortgages have been diced up and repackaged in the form of collateralized debt obligations. The holders of the various slices have conflicting interests. It would take too long to work out the conflicts to include a mortgage modification provision in the rescue package. The package is, however, project the ability to be modifying bankruptcy law as it relates to principal reductions.

Now that the crisis has been unleashed, a large-scale rescue package is probably indispensable. But if the crisis is to be brought under control and stabilizing the deployed bailout funds and the banking system is the right way to go. Not every bank deserves to be saved, but the experts at the federal Reserve, with proper supervision, can be counted on to make the right judgments.

Management of the crisis should not prevent the consequences of past mistakes could be produced by departing them of the Bell's credit facilities. Making government funds available should also encourage the private sector to participate in recapitalizing the banking sector and bringing the financial system to close. *Project Syndicate*

George Soros is chairman of Soros Fund Management.

Room 1404, 13th Floor

MANILA, PHILIPPINES—THE CIRCUS IS RAMPAGING inside my head. The elephants are up dancing and the acrobats are flying, and I hear my Pomeranian's snapping the ringmaster's whip while dancing the rancan. I am pressed in a corner of my overcrowded skull, standing quietly on the off chance the circus won't know I'm in town. Then the doorbell rings, the Rwandan exploder behind my eyes, and I stagger to the door and politely tell housekeeping to go away.

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE
Patricia Evangelista

I'll tell you when I am. I am sitting on a yellow brocade chair, in a white room with white walls and a white bed 12 floors above Ohara Boulevard. Outside the window is a checkerboard of floating red and green roofs, a row of skinny plants in round-green pots marching down the center of the highway, and what appears to be a billion squid (maybe engineering in orthopaedic not-so-sure-surgery parking garage). My internet is naturally purely journalistic—although 24 floors do make it difficult to confirm if the gentleman in blue is wearing a murder weapon or just little friend.

I have been in hiding for the last seven days, attempting to write a first draft of the whole series of the half-dozen unrelated beginnings of unrelated sentences and the mad paragraphs that end in semi-colons. The outlook doesn't lift the headache, the Ibuprofen refuses to kill the banquets, Beyond Bernanke is now swinging a pink hula hoop, and there is the thudding and banging of someone building the Taj Mahal in Room 1405. I sit, my hands on the windows my face to the wall, attempting to produce a thousand five hundred grammatically-arranged words. Today, it is the st-tongue-ment that matters. *Camera* is negotiable. Relevance is safe. Justice, to the absence of the musings, I will give you a happy medium.

At nine in the morning last Saturday I went on self-imposed leave. Turned off my mobile phone. Packed sweatpants and socks and intelligent books written by intelligent people. Warned all and sundry that I intend to vacate the planet. Found what was left of my savings into a tray at a rambutchery.

That week, my soul is my own, my bladder was in the mercy of commercial space, and I still finally be able to write. I decided the world was at fault for my inability to string sentences together. See the first nine days the months I've been preparing for television, I will finally go through a day with out the pretension that my director will decide his must pay burning offer. Aside from the vegetables. It is a week without needing with pompous government bureaucrats and the pompous executives of pompous bureaucrats; a week without spur to manage, husbands to sway, and the heartwrenching nightmare of a half-second's half-second of pre-filmed scenes.

The days I checked in, I spent the afternoon buying snacks of yellow-pad, spent the second day—and most of the yellow paper—making to do lists, room-refreshening visits when more specific lists flood the cinema, call lists for updates, edit essay number 241. The next day I went out to buy adhesive tape to tack the lists on the hotel walls.

My walls are now beautifully papered with various lists, the name of which I will not mention.

There is a strange zone that comes over anyone who lives in school. Undistracted, I live by myself in 26 square meters of room along Penny Avenue. I wash dishes bi-monthly; I use towels. I've lived since elementary; I haven't made my bed in the last four years. But after one day in a hotel, the instant the door closes behind me, I am overcome by the desire to wash, water bed, towels fresh and white and fanned out over the comforter. I am offended when housekeeping knocks when they are not wanted, offended more when they are two minutes late. I find it for the front desk and think evil thoughts when the phone keeps ringing. I want doors opened for me. I want the food delivered at regular times and housekeeping and the coffee house by hour. I order room-service and coffee before or midnight.

I write a little, read a little, find myself turning on my phone to check if anyone needed me urgently, and am terribly insulted for the fact that no one does. I call the one man in the world I don't want to speak to, and then I call the one man I want to speak to after asks if I'm done talking. I look at the lists on my walls, take a shower, look at my walls, take another shower, even a bubble bath then take another shower.

It's only when I find myself on the floor, alternately staring at my toes and scanning the lines on the bare wood when that I give up. I get up, off to find my production crew, themselves going haywire shooting the movie my director had suddenly decided to shoot. An hour later I'm in the middle of the second and forty of a crowded movie set in Cagayan, perfectly happy to sit quietly with a notebook on top of rolls of wire, sighing beautifully-muscled actors and being stopped on by highschool students and extras who think that I am the cinema scene members, while 40 people work hours to shoot a 15-second sequence.

Then I go back to my white room, sit down in front of the white walls, and decide that if I'm going to be broke, I might as well have something to sell. I have been waiting for 28 hours. I have written more than I have written in many very little, and am living on cans of tuna and not much else. There is a headache blooming at the center of my skull, but if I write long enough and hard enough, I can manufacture enough hot air to send the circus packing and blow the pink-clouded opera singer out of my ear.

Let me start over. It is 9 a.m. I am sitting on a yellow brocade chair by a hotel window, a few hours from checkout, looking down at the unfolding cereal while the sun shoots lightning off the windshields of hundreds of honking trucks and careening jeeps. Later, I will go home to my apartment, open my easy door, and walk past the clothes strung in the exit. There I will sit at my desk and write a column, very much in debt, with little to show for it other than a few pages of double-spaced manuscript, a one thousand-one-hundred-word column, a pile of dirty laundry, and a powerful urge to shoot aggression in hate.

* * *

Send comments to pat.evangelista@gmail.com

THEY SAID

Legislature's role

"The role of the legislature is to make laws, not to edit. Someone suspects guilt of a crime or wrongdoing. Our Constitution has not bestowed upon the legislature the latter role. Just as the judiciary cannot legislate, neither can the legislature adjudicate or prosecute."
—The Supreme Court

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Joan V. Sarmiento Jr.

Financial crisis sends Bush standing on his head

By Michael Lim Mah-Hui

FIFTEEN MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE financial crisis exploded in the United States with the implosion of two hedge funds managed by Bear Stearns.

Since then Bear Stearns has been acquired by JP Morgan Chase. Two other veritable investment banks—Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy and Merrill Lynch was bought by Bank of America—have also disappeared, leaving only Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. Both have given up their status as stand-alone investment banks to become bank-holding companies in order to receive funding from the Federal Reserve Bank ("the Fed").

This is indeed a fall for masters of the universe, Wall Street bankers who once commanded the heights of the financial industry and thought they were invincible.

What went wrong and why has the turmoil continued unabated, jumping from one crisis to another?

Risks underestimated

All the industry players, including the Fed, have underestimated the risks and severity of the crisis.

In October last year, four months into the crisis, Lehman Brothers bought Archstone and made a $3.9-billion loss, and it sold its unit at a huge discount.

Several sovereign funds have also suffered huge book losses by buying into the shares of the US investment and commercial banks. Early this year, ABN, the largest US bank, was planning, thought that in the worst case scenario, the exposure from its credit default obligations (CDOs) was $0.5 billion. The opposite scenario for the eventual losses as a percentage of the notional principal is 15 to 20%. [In notional terms the credit default swaps market alone are said to be worth about $45 trillion.]

Credit default swaps are simple contracts written on a financial institution like a bank or investment company to guarantee the underlying bonds of another issuer.

It turned out that a few weeks later, the Fed had to pump in $80 billion to keep ABN afloat. In other words, even the financial institutions that peddle and hold these innovative financial products like collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) and CDSs do not know what they are worth and how much risks they are exposed to.

CDOs involve bundling a class of asset backed securities into a special purpose vehicle and rearranging those assets into different credit ratings, investment rates and priority of payment.

Are these products marked to market, marked to model, or marked to myth? Marked-to-market is the accounting term describing assets at market price rather than historical cost. Marked-to-model refers to valuing assets based on financial models.

Because these products have been widely distributed and often sit on off-balance-sheet items, no one knows for sure how much is being held by whom and which financial institution can see credit-worthy.

Frozen

The has resulted in a freezing of the money market and the virtual shut down of the credit market—the lifeline of the financial system.

Despite the Fed maintaining the Fed fund rate at 2 percent, the three-month interbank lending rate is now trading between 60 and 140 points above the overnight index swap, indicating banks are unwilling to lend to one another for two reasons.

- Banks may need the liquidity themselves and hence hoard the cash to meet rainy days.
- Because they don't trust each other, or any point banks with excess cash would rather invest in the three-month Treasury bills at 0.45 percent than lend to other financial institutions at more than 3 percent.

Worse, the Fed and other central banks in Europe had to pump in more than $200 billion of extra liquidity to keep the financial system flowing.

Investor of last resort

The fed has run out of monetary bullets. It started intervening in the capital markets as a purchaser/investor. The cause of Bear Stearns, followed by the bailout of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and AIG.

The bailout costs of Bear Stearns and AIG are easier to quantify at $200 billion and $85 billion. (Some of Fannie and Freddie are much bigger and could cost $300 billion to $400 billion.

The Fed did not bail out Lehman Brothers because it figured Lehman's collapse would not threaten the whole financial system. However, the market did not like the piecemeal measures of the Fed and the Treasury.

So not only did the stock market sour, but, more worrying, banks and financial institutions also stopped a capital strike. Even money market funds that were supposed to be as safe as cash fell below their net asset value and the drying up of the $3.4 trillion money market would have serious repercussions on the running of the corporate sector.

Lack of confidence

Clearly, there was a total lack of confidence in the financial system. This prompted the Fed and Treasury to enact a comprehensive bailout program by proposing the establishment of a Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), similar to Resolution Trust Corp. (RTC) that was set up in the late 1980s to bail out the failed savings and loans associations.

The proposed TARP would try to clean up the balance sheet of financial institutions by buying up the toxic assets such as the CDO, CDS and mortgage-backed securities so that they can hopefully return to the business of lending.

Harder to value

The crux what the govern ments did in South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia during the 1997 Asian financial crisis at great cost to taxpayers.

Remember, the first step was that the assets are not as simple as before because the assets are more complicated and harder to value. At what price would the government buy the assets? At market price? At what is called "fire sale" where funds and private equity funds that would be willing to snap them up at bargain prices.

Social welfare for rich

This would require the selling financial institutions to take huge losses and seek fresh recapitalization, which is uncertain as the sovereign funds that were the only white knights who could bail out banks have also run into a crisis-cum-loss mode.

If the government bought it at above market price, then it is effectively asking taxpayers to subsidize the losses of the financial institutions.

The Republican administration of President George W. Bush preached the superiority of the free-market system and railed against government intervention and social welfare. Now, it is doing just the opposite.

By socializing all the risks and costs while privatizing all the gains, it is practicing social welfare for the rich. While it is averse to giving a few billion dollars for social welfare programs, it is quick to bail out Wall Street that could run more than $1 trillion.

Revolving door

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, ex-chief of Goldman Sachs, is now hailed as the savior of Wall Street. Without subscribing to a conspiracy theory, we cannot overlook the close connections between Wall Street leaders and the highest ranking officials in the Treasury and the Fed.

There is a revolving door between Wall Street, Capitol and Pennsylvania Streets. Many past Treasury and Fed officials join Wall Street after they have their jobs and vice versa. They all share the same paradigm and values. In fact, Wall Street has enormously vested interest in influence over Congress and the Executive branch.

Tail wagging the dog

While Federal struggles to get $700 billion in cash loans from the government, Wall Street has little difficulty in obtaining a still-less-dollar bailout. The power of finance capital has wrecked many countries' economic futures. Sadly, the tail of the financial system is now wagging the dog (the real economy).

The liquidity crisis of the financial system resembles an inverted pyramid—with power money (M3 or M2) bottoming only 10 percent at the base, above that is unutilized debt (20 percent), and on top are derivatives (70 percent), according to David Blanch of Independent Strategy.

Root cause of instability

An example, the notional principal in the CDS market alone rose from $1.8 trillion in $62-trillion between 2001 and 2008. (The world's GDP in 2008 is slightly under $50 trillion.)

This high leverage (borrowing) and expansion of banks and the shadow banking system are an open invitation for the root causes of financial fragility and instability.

The average Wall Street bank is leveraged 30 times (from 12 times in 2004), while the average commercial bank (without investment banking activities) is leveraged 10 times. It will balance sheet items are included, the leverage is much higher.

Leveraging, deleveraging

Leveraging and playing the maturity mismatch (i.e. lending long-term, higher-yielding assets with cheaper short-term funds) are the stuff that makes money for financial institutions.

Prudently managed they are acceptable; recklessly mismanaged they are lethal.

Hyman Minsky predicted 20 years ago that the financial system was increasingly becoming more fragile as it moved away from hedge financing to speculative and Ponzi financing.

Hedge financing is where the debtor is able to pay principal and interest, in speculative financing, the debtor is able to service interest but the principal is rolled over.

In Ponzi financing, the debtor has difficulty doing both, besides is not based not on the cash flow ability of the debtor to repay debt, but on the expectation that the rising value of collateral (land, houses, stocks, etc.) would enable the debtor to service part of its debt. This happened to subprime mortgages and leverage buyout loans.

Leveraging is a wonderful ride when the markets are rising, but is fatal in deflating markets.

What we are witnessing today is the deleveraging process in which asset values are falling, and individuals and institutions are forced to sell assets to cover their liabilities.

This, in turn, sends prices spiraling downward with each round of selling. This deleveraging process has not stopped both for consumers and for financial institutions.

The prices of houses and shares are still falling and loans are not reached bottom. US consumers with negative savings rates are struggling to keep afloat and cannot take on any more debt.

For financial institutions, deleveraging has a great multiplier effect. For every dollar of capital lost, banks have to reduce their lending by $10 for Wall Street firms, the deleveraging is 30 times.

The equity markets theorized that skyrocketed for two days after the announcement of the program, pound had out plan, for as they digested the news, they became more sober. This bailout will add to the US government's debt which stands at about $5.8 trillion.

This, combined with the current account deficit, could threaten the AAA-profile rating of the United States. The government has a few options—to raise tax which is definitely and/or to inflate its way out of the debt which will cause the dollar to crumble further.

Already, the United States is the largest debtor in the world. How much longer will the rest of the world, particularly Asia and the Middle East, continue to finance the United States and at what price? This will determine its fate of the US economy.

It is likely the financial turmoil has not run its full course yet.

(Michael Lim Mah-Hui wrote in the Nov. 18, 2007 issue of Talk of the Town about the roots of the subprime crisis. He also wrote in the March 30 issue about the escalating crisis. He worked for more than 20 years in various international investment, commercial and development banks like Credit Lyonnais (CL) Bank, Deutsche Bank and Chemical Bank (now JP Morgan) and Asian Development Bank. He is now a senior fellow at the Asian Public Intellectuals Program of the Nippon Foundation. He can be reached at limmahhui@gmail.com)

Across the NATION

Drive launched vs mining in Guimaras

'Tagaytay 5' slams attempt to jail them anew

CALAMBA CITY—THE FIVE POLITICAL prisoners known as "Tagaytay 5," who were recently ordered freed by the lower court, lambasted the recent attempt of the police to jail them for the second time.

On Sept. 8, the Tagaytay City Prosecutors' Office, through prosecutors Ernesto B. Velasco Edgar A. Ambagan, filed a motion for reconsideration with the Tagaytay Regional Trial Court Branch 18, challenging the dismissal of the rebellion charges against the five filed two years ago.

The Department of Justice and the Philippine National Police charged the five of rebellion for allegedly planning to overthrow the Arroyo administration.

In a statement sent to the inquirer, the "Tagaytay 5" called the PNP-DOJ move "a desperate and violent implementation," it said.

Tagaytay Judge Edwin G. Lardizabal ruled that the five farmers were innocent of the charge of rebellion, and consequently ordered their release from incarceration on Aug. 29.

In a phone interview Saturday morning, lawyer Jose Maxwell I. Ibobor said the motion is now in the hands of judges.

"It would be a double trap only as the case against the 'Tagaytay 5' was duly tried and dismissed," he said.

The lawyers of the five filed a manifestation opposing the motion for reconsideration on Sept. 15.—Nina Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

PROTESTING nurses and students put up signs demanding the reinstating of Dean Ruth Thelma Tingda, one of the school officials who helped blow the whistle on cheating that marred the June 2006 exams. Tingda handed her resignation on Friday over a dispute with school officials. —NICOLE CARREON/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Nursing students walk out for resigned dean

BAGUIO CITY—NURSING STUdents of Easter College in Sunday walked out of their classrooms and from their duties in various hospitals to protest the resignation of a dean who helped uncover the 2006 nursing board examinations scandal.

Over 500 students gathered outside the college after learning that school administrators had accepted on Friday the resignation of Ruth Thelma Tingda, who is also governor of the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA).

Tingda is among the four Phil officials and Baguio school leaders who supported three nursing licensure applicants whom they reported that some examinees had their tested photocopies of the test questions and answers.

Tingda was not at the rally because of a meeting with the deans of other nursing schools in Northern Luzon. She did not reply to the messages telephone calls.

Easter College officials were also not in the campus on Saturday.

Mark Reyes Ong, president of the Easter College Supreme Student Council, said school officials accepted Tingda's resignation on Friday despite protests and petitions submitted to them since Sept. 11 by the students, faculty members and parents.

The students put up placards and signs demanding that the Easter College board of trustees intercede and retain Tingda.

"We need our teachers," read several of the placards.

The faculty of the Easter College of Nursing also submitted an open letter to the administrators urging them to return Tingda's resignation letter, saying the college "cannot afford major upheavals."

Students had credited Tingda for an 86 percent passing rate of its nursing graduates in the recent board.

Nursing instructors allowed the students to leave their classrooms, saying they supported their positions and were expressing sentiments from school officials were tense.

Some teachers, who asked not to be named fearing retaliation from school authorities, said the final begin as an ordinary dispute over funds but it escalated into a personal disagreement with the school leaders. Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—GUIMARAS RESIDENTS AND officials have launched a signature campaign against applications for large-scale mining on the island province.

Led by Church groups and officials, the campaign coupled with an education drive in villages seeks to pressure government agencies to disapprove mining operations in the island that still has to recover from the massive oil spill two years ago.

Guimaras Gov. Felipe Nava said they would continue their campaign against mining applications even though the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had already said it would consider the stand and sentiments of the residents when they evaluate the mining applications.

"There is still no guarantee that mining applications will not be approved and that effects of mining companies to come in and operate will stop. We will never rest until this is clear," he was told the lawmen at the sidelines of a multi-sectoral assembly on large-scale mining held in Jordan, Guimaras, on Friday.

The assembly was attended by leaders of local government, religious groups, nongovernment groups and people's organizations.

Nava said three applications for mining covered 65 percent of the island or around 27,000 hectares. The mining applications were for areas located in 22 villages in Nueva Valencia town, 13 in Sibunag, 22 in San Lorenzo, six in Buenavista and five in the capital town of Jordan.

The Philippine Synergy Resources and Properties Corp., a subsidiary of the Australia-based Nuelan Mining NL, has exploration phase for gold and copper deposits in a 2,000-hectare area covering nine of the 26 villages of Nueva Valencia.

The application included the villages of Supanduag, Sta. Dominga, Cautiverio, Into Bonga, Imbayacao, La Paz, Cabubugan, Camburaos and Igdarapdap.

Nava said they would step up their advocacy against mining operations even if the DENR does not approve the applications.

"We cannot be our guard down. We have to be vigilant," he said.

Fr. Jose Manuel Encabo, parish priest of Jordan, said they were standing by the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines against mining.

"There will always be the whole island," said Encabo who was among the Church leaders who attended the assembly.

Fr. Benny Benevidi, of the Bantog parish of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, said he also opposed the mining applications because these will threaten environment.

"We do not oppose development but these should not be at the cost of losing our resources," said Deputy Jose Cevallo, a director of the Jordan Ahrobosan association.

Fr. Mahonry Cuizon, parish priest of Nueva Valencia, said lessons should be learned from communities that were destroyed by mining operations.

Provincial environment official Gualberto Gallo and health officer Dr. Felicito Lozarita also warned that mining operations could pollute water sources and lead to mercury poisoning.

NEWSBRIEFS

CATANDUANES

Bee stings kill farmer

A 70-YEAR-OLD farmer died Tuesday after he and his wife were attacked by honeybees in a coastal barangay about 10 kilometers from the poblacion.

According to their neighbors, who brought the couple to the Eastern Bicol Medical Center in the morning of Sept. 23, Florentino Abaag Jr. with Maria and a grandson were on their way to their farm at about 7 a.m. when they were attacked by the insects.

Managos told the boy to run back to their house at Barangay Balog to get a mosquito net.

When the boy came back, the bees were just gone enough for Florentino, kneeling but bent at the mercy of the bees.

Volunteer nurse Rodel Torres said the emergency team personnel counted over a hundred bee stings all over his body, including on his eyelids and about half the number on Maria.

The old man and ambulant when he arrived at EBMC had developed into unconscious-ness and died due to severe anaphylactic (extreme allergic reaction) shock.

His wife was later sent home after being treated.

—Ferdie Gimon, Inquirer Southern Luzon

SORSOGON CITY

Motorcycle cop killed

A MEMBER of the Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group died when his motorcycle hit a tree van along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Tugos, Irosin on Sunday.

Police identified the fatality as SPO1 Rodolfo Miravite of Irige City in Camarines Sur.

The van driver, George Destajo, 38, surrendered to authorities.

—Roy Dorado, Inquirer Southern Luzon

4 teens hurt in grenade blast

COMBARO CITY—four teenagers were wounded when a grenade exploded in Purugay Heights 10 from around 12:30 a.m. yesterday.

Chief Insp. Danilo Mastrique, police station 2 chief, identified the victims as Bernadeth Hapinis, Ronjo Mangada, Cling Mangada and Jojo Ali, all residents of Barangay Amante.

Mastrique said the explosion occurred inside the house of an Anton Ramirez, who was hosting a gathering of relatives.

Mastrique said nobody had seen the perpetrator, who could have positioned himself outside the house.

He said they were still investigating the incident to determine the motive and identity of the attacker.

—Edwin G. Fernando, Inquirer Mindanao

Rights group hit military use of air raids in Samar

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A HUMAN RIGHTS group in Eastern Visayas has accused the military of conducting air raids to remove villagers of two Samar towns that resulted in the dislocation of families.

The Eastern Visayas chapter of Kampo—formerly Karapatang Tumpak—conducted the air strikes in the villages of Bayang in San Jorge and in Hagbay in San Jose de Buan on Sept. 16 and 18.

The human rights group also alleged that aside from dropping bombs on those villages, the military also arrested and detained civilians.

"There were no clear indications that the military is not considering the lives of the civilians and the people whom they are mandated to protect," the group's regional secretary general Kathrina Castillo said in a text mail.

While the military admitted having conducted air strikes, they maintained it was only done in one village in each Samar town as part of the support for the soldiers pursuing suspected rebels.

Maj. Magbantayog Tarala, chief of the 8th Infantry Division civil-military affairs, said the allegations were lies that were part of Kampanyo's efforts to malign the Armed Forces of the Philippines before the public.

"It's nothing but fabricated lies. While it was true that there were such an incident, it was part of our legitimate operations as we have those members of the New People's Army in the area," Tarala said in a phone interview on Thursday.

He said the military considered air raids and bombings in the second week of September but these were done only in flat-top villages.

Tarala also clarified that nobody was living in the area that was bombed by the military, which he said was two kilometers away from the barangay proper.

"We have discovered in the area some (abandoned) camps of the rebels. It serves as the base of the rebels operating in Samar," Tarala said.

Tarala also denied that they arrested and detained civilians since there were no people living in the area.

U.S. Embassy Club's
57th semi-annual
Shoppers' Day Bazaar
USEC
Saturday, October 4, 2008
9am to 5pm
World Trade Center
Admission: P 100
Kids 12 and under: Free
SHOP hundreds of the Philippines' best vendors under one roof
WIN great prizes in the biggest and luckiest raffle around
SAVOR the tastes of a delicious and diverse food court
ENJOY free baggage packing and hold area for stress-free shopping
HELP make a positive difference—all proceeds go to local charities
For more information, please contact USEC
INQUIRER
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INQUIRER Mindanao

AN AERIAL view of the floods affecting Cotabato City

Antiflooding body a mere paper tiger

By Charlie Saitan
Cotabato City

AS FLOODWATERS CONTINUE TO RISE IN COTABATO City and in other parts of Central Mindanao and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a Malacañang-created task force that would have addressed the problem has remained a paper tiger.

In Zone, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the creation of the Mindanao River Basin Task Force in the aftermath of Typhoon "Frank," which displaced some 15,000 families in the two regions. The body would find solutions to the perennial problem of flooding.

The heavy siltation in rivers was among the main reasons cited for the floods in earlier consultation meetings of government agencies in the region.

"Our hands are tied, [our current] mandate and functions unless Malacañang comes out with an executive order that will give us the authority and funds to start tackling the perennial flood problem. We are virtually powerless without the EO," Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr., Central Mindanao police director, said.

Arroyo, who also chairs the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council, was named task force vice chair, while Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, was chair.

Unless the budget for the task force is allocated, it could not move forward, Serapio said.

"We officials said that even before, **an order the President had already** ordered the release of P30 million to clear the heavily silted Simuay River in Sharif Kabunsuan and the Rio Grande de Mindanao, during **her visit to Mindanao in June.**

"But, where is the money?" asked Mayor Muslimin Sema, who flew to Manila on Tuesday to lobby for task allocation and additional dredging **machines to hasten the clearing of** rivers and waterways of debris and basuraleta, said.

Diosdado Mangaoang, director of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Central Mindanao, said the funds had yet to be given to his office. He could not say where the money is now and how soon his office can get hold of it.

'Flooding problem is there, but task force can't move'

ON JUNE 21, THE RIO GRANDE DE MINDANAO carved a small river when floodwaters brought by Typhoon "Frank" and flooded downstream areas, especially Cotabato City.

Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo has appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo for "immediate help" as the water continuously rose up.

A week later, Mrs Arroyo visited the city **and surveyed the flooded areas. Later in her visit,** she named Quevedo as head of the Mindanao River Basin Task Force (MRBTF), a body she ordered created to rehabilitate the [silted] heavily silted waterways. Nothing has been heard about it since.

"The problem is the plans are there but the Task Force could not move," he said.

Q&A

Last week, Quevedo was interviewed by the Inquirer's Cotabato City correspondent Edwin Fernandez Escorpiso:

Q: Why do we have floods in many towns and in Cotabato City?

A: Siltation has raised the bottom level of the Liguasan Marsh and the rivers connected to it and made them very shallow. Siltation is the accumulation of sand, mud and sediment (dirt) brought about by water flowing from denuded mountains. With siltation in the rivers and in Liguasan Marsh is worsened by the accumulation of water hyacinth (water lilies), whose roots also carry a lot of soil.

Therefore, when there is heavy rainfall or prolonged rainfall, the rivers and the marshes cannot accommodate all the water. The water seeks new outlets, the rivers overflow, the water breaches the banks of the rivers and floods occur. This is the main reason for the floods.

Q: What areas are flooded? And why?

A: Cotabato City is only one of the areas **that are flooded. Also flooded because of** heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers are several towns in four provinces: North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sharif Kabunsuan and Sultan Kudarat. As of today (Sept. 18), **about 45,000 families have been affected.**

These areas are flooded because it is not only Liguasan Marsh that has major siltation problems. Siltation is taking place over the entire Cotabato River Basin which covers **large areas of North Cotabato, Maguindanao,** Sharif Kabunsuan and Sultan Kudarat.

About 55 rivers flow into the water basin, all carrying sand and gravel. The main rivers that we are familiar with are the Pulangi River, the Allah River, the Rio Grande de Mindanao and Tamontaka River. Cotabato City is also affected by the Simuay River, which is heavily silted. Because of this, it breached its river banks, changed its course and is now **flowing into the Tamontaka area in Datlag.**

One can say, therefore, that the cause of the floods can be located not only within the Mindanao (Cotabato) River Basin but also in Bukidnon, Agusan, and South Cotabato.

Q: What has to be done to stop the flooding?

A: A comprehensive dredging of the waterways, rivers, and the Liguasan Marsh has to be done. Dredging means digging out the silt from **the waterways and restoring their original** bottom level. Clearing them of water hyacinth would also help. Anything less than comprehensive dredging would only be superficial.

Other engineering works that would prevent silt from quickly accumulating would also have to be done.

Q: Do we have the equipment and the funds to stop the flooding?

A: The equipment now available are too **small to accomplish the work. Even if our** government agencies (local governments and regional agencies) try to do their best, these equipment would only be overwhelmed. Limited funds would hardly be able to cope with a problem of such magnitude. They need help from the national government.

Q: So what is the national government doing to solve the problem?

A: The national government has conceived of a task force on Mindanao River Basin rehabilitation and development that would have the authority to study major plans, implement the plans, and coordinate projects for short-term and long-term solutions to the flooding problem. The plans have been done. The draft of a presidential executive order **finally establishing the task force has also** been submitted. The executive order is being awaited for the President's signing.

Q: How many of the canals have you organized, the President had released P30 million to the governor of Sultan Kudarat for the Lambayong project. This project intends to remove the original **course of the Lambayong River** that had caused so much destruction and disheartenment. **As of the last** report, about 25 percent of the project has been completed.

Some of the money was also used for the January river rehabilitation.

The President also provided funds for the access road in the new Datila Bridge across Rio Grande. The access road will be completed within 100 working days.

Q: Are lack of funds and equipment, the dredging of the Rio Grande and Tamontaka River could only be on a small scale.

Q: What has the Mindanao River Basin Task Force done regarding the flood problem?

A: The River Basin Task force has organized itself into three technical working groups. It has completed the rehabilitation plans of Cotabato City, ARMM and Region 12. It has reviewed and studied old plans for the rehabilitation of the Cotabato River Basin. It has submitted a draft of a Presidential Executive Order. It has encouraged and mentored the ministers and mobilization officers of local government officials and agencies such as in Cotabato City and North Cotabato.

Most of all, on Sept. 15, the chairman/**designate of the task force was able to call the attention of the President to the urgent** and grave necessity of responding to the needs of flood control and rehabilitation. The President, in turn, has responded with instructions for action the same day the **chairman/designate made his appeal.**

Q: What government agencies have been mobilized to help solve the flood problem?

A: First on the list are the local officials **and the LGUs they represent,** i.e., Cotabato City and various towns affected in the provinces mentioned above. They have been in the forefront of relief and rehabilitation. They are to be credited with acting **locally while we waited for national action.**

Q: What concrete responses should we now expect from the task force?

A. The task force has not received any funds to this date. Funds were released directly to particular government agencies. But because of its (late) appeal to the President, the task force expects faster actions, including the deployment of equipment.

Q: How soon should we expect the floodwaters to recede?

A. The dredging is an work that can be done overnight. Nor can we expect the flood**waters to recede in two or three days**—even as rains continue in the mountains of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Bukidnon, and Agusan. That is the bad news.

But we have to be realistic. Therefore, we should not be impatient. Dredging, at least to the extent that it will result in the receding of **floodwaters, will take a few months.** We hope that the heavy rainfall will soon stop so that work can proceed as expeditiously as possible. Prayers to God for this is the only remedy.

Q: What can citizens do?

A: **I appeal to everyone** to join relief brigades and assist the estimated 200,000 people who have evacuated to dry land.

Obama scores in debate, according to surveys

Front page A1

heated exchanges that highlighted broad policy differences.

Both candidates avoided major gaffes in a spirited debate, taking place at a time of deep national peril amid the Wall Street crisis threatening to hobble the US economy and millions of working-class jobs.

Obama came across as polished and well-briefed, and seemed to meet the threshold many analysts set for him going in as a credible future leader of the United States.

McCain entered clear of errors that could be chalked up to his age, looked focused and engaged in the debate, mostly on foreign policy which both sides see as his strong point.

He presented himself as a champion of reform and scourge of wasteful spending, and defended his sudden return to Washington to deal with the financial meltdown.

McCain aptly agreed to take part about 18 hours before the debate, after calling for it to be delayed over the finance crisis, a move Democrats branded as a ploy by a desperate campaign.

Less than 48 days before election day on Nov. 4, differences over the way to bring battered Washington the debate on a red carpet to stage at the University of Mississippi.

Surge strategy

Obama claimed credit for opposing the invasion in 2003 and McCain said he had been instrumental in pushing the successful surge strategy.

"We are winning in Iraq and we'll come home. And we'll come home as we have when we have won other wars and not as defeat," McCain said, accusing Obama of denying the achievements of US troops in the war.

But Obama bit back, saying "six years ago I stood up and opposed this war," condemning McCain for standing with Bush over the 2003 US-led invasion to topple Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

TOO CLOSE TO CALL That was generally the US media's assessment of the first debate between rivals for the White House Republican Sen. John McCain and Democratic Sen. Barack Obama. AFP/File

"I wish I had been wrong, for the sake of the country and they had been right but that's not the case," Obama said.

"When the vote started you said it was quick and easy, you said we knew where the weapons of mass destruction were. You were wrong.

"You said that we were going to be greeted as liberators. You were wrong. You said that there was no history of violence between Shia and Sunni and you were wrong."

Media names no winner

In contrast with other top publications, the Chicago Tribune insisted McCain had the upper hand. In its view, given recent poll numbers, "McCain had to make the better showing" in Mississippi.

No instant result measure, he did. The bulk of Friday night's debate took place on the turf McCain knows best—foreign affairs and military endeavors. That showed," the paper said.

The New York Times said Obama "clearly dominated the economic portion of the debate" as he called for a major overhaul of the financial regulatory system and the need to help ordinary Americans as well as bankers.

But the paper stopped short of declaring the Illinois senator the winner of Friday's faceoff.

The Wall Street Journal said the encounter largely followed the script and offered no surprises.

"Neither candidate broke from talking points, neither one made a gaffe, and both ran more on the grounds where they are most comfortable—John McCain on foreign policy, and Barack Obama on domestic issues," the paper said in an editorial.

The Washington Post focused its attention of similarities between the two candidates.

"Some nuances emerged, the two candidates basically have the same vision for countering the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, responding to Russia's aggressiveness toward its neighbors, fighting the war in Afghanistan and advancing the Middle East peace process," the paper editorialized.

60 million watch

An audience of at least 60 million was believed to have tuned in for the eagerly anticipated contest, which online after a tumultuous week of grim economic turmoil that has brought the US financial system to its knees.

Public opinion polls have shown Obama making gains over the past week on the question of who could best lead the country on economic issues, and most polls have Obama holding a slight and growing lead over McCain.

Obama wins in Sunset Blvd.

Most watching the debate in front of television screens on Sunset Boulevard in the Democratic stronghold of Los Angeles believed Obama emerged as the victor.

"McCain just seemed to focus on presenting. Obama seemed to be arguing the points clearly. I felt like Obama was being true of a politician and more of a leader," said Conor Collins, 26, a photographer.

Ben Li, a 22-year-old animator from China, said he believed McCain represented the past, Obama the future.

Blue cocktails

In Washington, around 150 people at the Stoffed Hotel's Le Bar quaffed Democrat blue or Republican-red cocktails while nibbling on red, white and blue patty bonbons.

Obama's customers were routinely greeted with cheers and applause, while McCain's forays were with groans and derision.

"The blue cocktails are definitely selling better," a waitress remarked.

In Obama's hometown, the crowd gathered at the Chicago History Museum for a theoretically bipartisan debate-watching party filled the auditorium with applause and laughter when Obama scored points.

Real-time critique

In cyberspace, meanwhile, the first-ever online streaming of a US presidential debate provided a platform for hordes of amateur political pundits to exchange real-time critiques of Obama and McCain.

More than 130,000 people logged into streamMyMilestones.org where the debate was broadcast live and pop-up boxes intermittently polled the audience for feedback regarding how the candidates were doing.

A crossover forum on the page allowed people to instantly post musings, accolades, insights, taunts or tirades and they did just that.

"What is wrong with McCain?" MyMilestones viewer Ann Lincoln writes in an online exchange during the debate.

'No need for war'

"We don't need more wars! He really sounds like a politician ... and by the way he is iconoclOLD to manage this nation."

Another trash-talkers at Obama, saying it takes a soldier to be commander-in-chief and calling his economic positions outdated or Marxist.

"Obama has no idea what he is doing," wrote "UnNormal Girl" while bashing the candidate's call for universal healthcare. AFP, Reuters and AP

'Drama king': Editor's ...

Front page A1

That abiding passion was recognized last Sunday, to properly dramatic fashion, when Cadiz, a desk editor at this newspaper's Lifestyle, became the first arts and culture honoree of the Philippine Blog Awards (PBA). Because the PBA community at Cine Sapulveda had no provision for that most theatrical of traditions, the acceptance speech, Cadiz soon saw and posted it on his blog.

Thrilling to be a fan

In it, he gave thanks to a gamut of emotions—of wonder, but tande special mention of "the Filipino Theater Artist, because he/she is what I write about mostly in your other post after post. It is a thrill to be a fan of some of our country's best talents, it is a privilege to be able to honor their hard work and devotion with this blog."

In barely nine years, his eponymous blog, www.gilbocadiz.blogspot.com, has generated over 140,000 page views; it has also earned the patronage of theater artists themselves. Lea Salonga, for instance, is a regular reader, through the blog, Joanna urged to London to send out about the auditions to Miss Saigon. Miss Saigon theory.

Industry professionals have also learned to use the blog to spread the word about upcoming plays. After Cadiz encouraged other theater goers to blog about the plays and even cite movies they've seen, by giving away tickets or handing out prizes out of his own pocket, theater organizers added the function to their marketing playbook. Now, through Cadiz's blog, they give away free tickets, only in exchange for the ticket holders' commitment to blog about their play-watching experience. (Call it bling 'n play.)

Theater reviews

The core of Cadiz's blog is the regular theater reviews he has written for the Inquirer since 2005, which he usually posts only after they are print.

But it is an increasingly narrow core, because Cadiz has added more types of posts to video interviews with acclaimed Asian-American playwright David Henry Hwang, for instance) and more features.

"Globe Cadiz" is the one place to go on the Internet if one wants to view or hear excerpts from memorable Filipino musical productions, including "Rent," "Bituin at Siete," "Da Kuan Leaves Dem Filipinos, the Musical" and "Dat Da Zaki-mah."

The result, as can be gleaned from the comments threads, traffic statistics and links to other blogs, there is a growing community of theater lovers, drawn together by a newspaper editor's long-running obsession.

Where's the magic?

That obsession allows Cadiz to wax critical. Last month, for instance, he ventured three very different plays: "Cinderella" at the CCP Main Theater, "Noli at Fili: Debuts 2008 (Dos Mil)" at the Peta Theater Center, and the recently ended "Hiraling Pakpak ng Ating mga Anak" at the Guerrero Theater in UP Diliman do not qualify as inconsequential productions. On the contrary, they evince much thought, planning, care and skillful craftsmanship. But they fail dismayingly short of any artistic resources dream is telling. The commitment is there, the magic isn't."

But he allows his enthusiasm free rein, too. In a review of Tanghalang Ateneo's "Otelo, ang Moro ng Venezia," he wrote: "Shakespeare supplies reasons for Iago's mischief—his thwarted promotion, Othello's possibly unwitting affair with Desdemona—but the way [Rudyl Vito] mouths them, even his sneaks conceived by such greatness.

"Instead, the wonderment of his perfect nature is mailto—a part, yago-free productions that takes impish delight at his evolving ability to spend lives and bend the reach to his will."

"Fiesta of that humorously, slithery stuff. This Iago, for all his outward ease and glib raconteurship, is at heart a misanthrope, and first dispenses poison with charismatic exuberance."

Other winners

The other finalists for the arts and culture award were "Dahyuan! Gingawasan!," "pamatay hamsterik," "Pa'ina Design Xtra dio" and "Pinoy Dream."

Other winners named during the 2nd Philippine Blog Awards included "Pinoy Web Startup" for Business, "Cinema Lovers" for Cinematology, "The Professional Slacker" for Entertainment, "voicesverse.com" for News and Media, and "Inbetin" in the Personal category.

The complete list of winners, including the recipients of Special Awards, can be found on the PBA blog, at www.philippineblogawards.com.ph.

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FINAL NOTICE

TO ALL THE GOLF CLUB MEMBERS OF THE FORMER MIMOSA GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

In view of the forthcoming turnover of the former Mimosa Leisure Estate to the new operator, all golf club members of the former Mimosa Golf and Country Club (MGCC) are hereby notified that only those meeting the following requirements shall be included in the final list to be endorsed to the new operator:

1. Members with proof of membership. ONLY the following proofs of membership are acceptable:
   a. Original Golf Certificate duly signed by authorized signatories of MLRC;
   b. Certificate of Membership duly validated by CDC as to its authenticity.

   AND

2. Members whose outstanding accounts/arrears as of September 30, 2008 are settled in full on or before December 15, 2008.

Members not meeting the above requirements are hereby advised to revalidate their membership by presenting the acceptable proofs and/or settle their outstanding accounts/arrears in full **on or before December 15, 2008** with the **Membership Office** located at:

CDC-PMO Team
Villa 1093 Travellers Palm St.,
Former Mimosa Leisure Estate,
Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines 2023
Telephone Nos.: (02) 584-4047 local 2011, 2039 or 2083;
(02) 299-5800; or (045) 599-5411

FAILURE to do the foregoing within the prescribed period shall **AUTOMATICALLY** result to the non-inclusion of the member in the final list to be endorsed to the new operator and the termination of playing rights and privileges within the facility.

This shall serve as a **FINAL NOTICE** to all golf club members of the former MGCC and shall supersede all previously issued notices.

(Sgd.) **BENIGNO N. RICAFORT**
President and Chief Executive Officer
Clark Development Corporation

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

NEWS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2008

Piolo, other heroes star in Dog Day concert

By Gwenn S. Medlo
Contributor

CHAIRMAN, REBELLE AND PIOLO were only too happy to oblige anyone who wanted to have a picture taken with them, play with them and stroke the back of their necks.

This was during a benefit concert at the Manila Bayside restaurant in Forbes Park last year. Today, the three "heroes" will again be the center of attraction at a benefit concert on the same rainforest entitled "Dog Day Afternoon, 2008."

If you haven't guessed by now, Chairman, Rebelle and Piolo are rescue dogs and rescue dogs.

And their lives every night is be called heroes. In October 2007, the three were rushed to the Glorietta 2 mall just minutes after a powerful blast ripped through it. It was the dogs who found the body of Macoseo de Leon, the last casualty to be recovered.

The three dogs also played instrumental roles in the search for a missing University of Santo Tomas constituent in 2004, the Quezon province candidates the same year, the Southern Leyte landslides in 2006, the Guimaras oil spill, Albay, mudslides late that year, and the most recent search for mountaineers swept away by a river in Zambales.

Chairman and Rebelle are female Belgian Malinois, while Piolo is a male Rhino.

The benefit concert hopes to raise funds for the three rescue dogs as well as other dogs and handlers of the Philippine K9 Search and Rescue (PhilSAR) Foundation. The Philippine National Red Cross is also a beneficiary of the concert.

Featured performers

"Dog Day Afternoon 2008: An Elegant Soiree of Light Classical Music" will feature performances by sopranos Jennifer Uy and Cecille Lopez Montes of the Philippine Opera Company pianists David Dizon and Nhoni Joy Lee, guitarists Dan de Dios and recorder player Romilee Marcelo, who rockster the event together with Noemi Spotlis and Miss Richard Gordon, PSPC chair.

PhilSAR will use the funds from the concert to continue training more search-and-rescue dogs and their handlers.

Twice a year, evaluators from the US-based National Association for Search and Rescue come to grade each dog-handler team and determine whether they can be certified as "Mission Ready." There teams have already attained this status, while six more are undergoing training.

PhilSAR is a project and affiliate of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), PNRC, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Air Force and National Disaster Coordinating Council.

In the past, rescue workers had to wait 72 hours for search-and-rescue dogs from the United States and Europe to arrive at local disaster sites.

Dogs and handlers needed

Toni Velo-Lovenga, executive director of the Manila Observatory, said they need additional dog owners who are willing to undergo training and be certified as volunteers.

Their kits of PhilSAR said dogs can smell a person buried beneath rubble or below ground up to depths of 40-100 feet, depending on the conditions. Some dogs can detect persons under water.

To qualify for PhilSAR, a dog has to be at least 12 months old, fit and disciplined — for search and rescue, intelligent, trainable, transportable, show a natural scenting ability and have good temperament.

Handlers, on the other hand, have to be at least 21 years old, of good moral character, physically and mentally fit, committed to the aims of the foundation and able to get along with other volunteers. He or she must have a good relationship with the dog outside of the training.

For tickets, call 8168746 and ask for Lilibeth Benedicto. For more information, e-mail the author or dmedlo@yahoo.com

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MRS Avancena in the garden of her house in Alabang. She says her daughter-in-law calls their home "Gilabang," a combination of Gilmore and Alabang.

THE QUEZON house on Gilmore Avenue in New Manila

'Gilmore is in my heart'

By Dalce Perdin-Bayday
Contributor

"HOW CAN YOU LEAVE A PLACE WHERE YOU'VE LIVED FOR 62 years?" This was the question friends asked of Maria Zenaida "Nini" Quezon-Avancena, 87, daughter of former President Manuel L. Quezon, when she moved to Alabang in 2006.

"It was the pollution and the traffic which had ruined from bad to worse, for I left Gilmore," was Nini's reply, referring to the Quezon house on Gilmore Avenue, New Manila, Quezon City, where she had lived since November 1945.

"But before the war, my dad's subways, links had recovered," she recalled. "And in those days, the only cure for it was bed rest. We were living in Malacañang but he was told that he should get out of there so that he could rest."

Nini added, "During the Commonwealth era, we had a house in Washington but my dad said it was too far. So his friend, Bernal Hennedy, gave us of my dad to live in his house. Most of New Manila at that time was practically owned by Bernal's wife, Doña Magdalena Veraguel. They had several houses for rent at that time. Dad moved into that house on Gilmore which had only three bedrooms. He stayed in one, my mother was in the middle room, and the doctor or nurse on duty would sleep in the third room. There was no room for us children so we stayed in Malacañang."

At that time, I was already doing postgraduate work at the University of Santo Tomas and my classes were in the afternoons only. So I would spend the day with dad and from there, go to the university," she said. "There was practically no traffic. You could go from one end of town to another. I would get in the car and in 10 or 15 minutes, I was in UST."

Lucky house

After President Quezon got well, Nini's mother, Doña Aurora, told her and her siblings, "You know, this house is lucky, reserve for us." She mentioned her husband to buy the house, which they were just renting, and he did. "Malagio po (Its actual owners were Filipinos)," said Nini. "Later, I was able to see the title and it was mortgaged and very, very cheap. I don't know whether it was P3 or something.

At that time, the Quezons were one of the few families residing in the area. Across their street, it was all talahib (coarse grass). "From our house to Makiling, there was nothing. You could see all the way to Makiling. There was no development yet," she recalled.

Formerly known to the pre-war days as the Magdalena Estate, Barangay Mariana (comprising New Manila) in Quezon City was envisioned to be the first high-end residential site for prominent Filipinos, mostly government officials, before other rosy subdivisions like Forbes Park in Makati came about.

Barangay Mariana has a total land area of 132,000 sq m or 132 hectares. Today, what used to be sprawling empty lots occupying several blocks are now occupied by multi-storied townhouses. Most of the original families staying in the barangay have either leased or sold their property.

Commercial establishments and churches now surround the boundaries of Barangay Mariana. Apart from Ali Central Home on Broadway Street (formerly Doña Juana Rodriguez Street), there is also the Pink Sisters Convent on Hennedy corner 11th Street and the Jubilee Christian Church.

Towering mango trees still line both sides of Gilmore Avenue and Broadway Street. When President Quezon envisioned building a democracy, it was Quezon City he had in mind.

During World War II, the Quezons went to the United States from Corregidor. "Our plan was that when dad's term, we would go back to Baguio because that's where I was born and where I grew up," said Nini. President Quezon, however, passed away in the US in 1944.

Doña Aurora's hunch about their house in Gilmore being lucky proved to be right. When the Quezons came back to the Philippines after the war, they found their house in Pinoy in ruins and there home in Baguio City Basement by the carpet bombing carried out by the Americans. Both houses were untenable.

Coming home

"The only house where we had a roof over our head was Gilmore," Nini recalled. "So my mother was saying, 'You see, I was right!' The house, however, had a big hole in the ceiling because there had been a dogfight. President Roxas told my mother: 'I'd have that ceiling fixed so you could come home to that house.' So we did. And I lived there until I decided to move to Alabang."

It was also the Gilmore property that provided income (from the rent of houses they had nearby) for Doña Aurora (who would be killed in an ambush in 1949 with her other daughter, Ma. Aurora, or Baby, and Nini's first husband, Philip Buencamino) and her family. The Gilmore property today is still owned by the Quezons.

What does Nini miss most about Gilmore? To this she immediately replied, "The only thing that I miss is my parish church, Mt. Carmel."

"And to those who ask me how I can leave a place where I've stayed for so long, I say, well, you know, as far as I am concerned, Gilmore is in my heart. Wherever I go, I carry it with me. Do you know what my daughter-in-law calls our new place? Gilabang! (It's a combination of Gilmore and Alabang)"

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes [illegible] a better life for their families. These are their stories.

OFW's faithful service builds 10-room school

Violy Agasino's employer gave her a P13-million gift for her hometown

By Greg Ventura and Karla Jose R. Pineda
Contributors

IN THE 1996 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES OF the Surnader Elementary School in Barac, Ilocos Norte, she was invited as guest speaker. Violeta Agasino, an overseas worker, had earned the podium spot for having donated a pressure pump worth P30,000 to the provincial school.

Violy, who finished a nursing course then settled for a job as a domestic helper in Hong Kong in 1990, gave the young graduation words of inspiration and hope. But what she remembers most about that day was how poor and run-down the school looked.

Violy wished she could help repair the classrooms or do something to make the school a better place.

"But even if I saved my salary for a whole year, it wouldn't have been enough to make a difference," she remembers thinking.

Twelve years ago, the idea of rebuilding the whole school in Surnader would have been unthinkable "as going to the moon," said the 53-year-old overseas worker with a hearty laugh. At the outset, she figured she could save up to help make a few repairs.

Reaching out

Family members say Violy has always been known to go out of her way to help others. She regularly sent money home to support her family. Still single, she also helped her nieces and nephews, who would run to her for their school needs.

She was determined to earn more money for her family. But she displeased Surnader schoolbrother stayed in her mind. It became her dream to help the school.

In Hong Kong, she took a double job. She was a trained maid in two households. Often she would eat her meals on the bus, commuting from one household to the other.

Biggest benefactor

She said her employers were kind. One of them was William F. Benter (she has worked for him for more than 13 years.

The result of the trust and confidence she gained would be more than she had ever imagined.

"Mr. Benter is known worldwide as a benefactor of various charitable causes. And so, one day, I approached him for Surnader."

"I asked him to consider helping out the school," she said.

She later admitted that her plan was ridiculous. "I'm really like that. If I want one thing to happen, I work very hard to get it. I'm very, thrifty, and a fighter."

Grand developments

In 1997, Violy got Benter to visit Surnader to see the school and assess its needs.

Violy was optimistic she could get Benter to repair a few classrooms. So she was surprised when he decided to look for an architect to design a new school.

It would take a few more years, but Violy says it was that visit that eventually led to the building of a new 10-classroom school that now sits on top of a hill, 6 kilometers away from the town proper of Barac.

Violy confided, "I didn't expect that he'd go for a new school. He granted almost 30-fold for this blessing for our town actually over 30-fold. I feel no regrets working in Hong Kong because it was there where I met the generous and kind-hearted Mr. Benter."

After studying the situation, Benter decided it was better to change the three decaying prefab buildings with a brand new 10-room building comprised of seven classrooms, a guidance room, a computer room, and an office for the board teachers.

The construction of the new school building started last January 2007. All in all, Benter made a P13-million donation to Surnader school.

Water tank, too

In addition, an elevated water tank, with a pressure pump much bigger than the one she donated in 1996, was installed. The old tanks where she once stood to address the graduating children was transformed into a spacious antiquities house. It is named after Benter.

Landscaping of the school grounds was also undertaken.

Materials salvaged from the old demolished were used for the construction of a school canteen, a utility kitchen, and the renovation of the old home economics house. Other scraps were used in making benches for a sports area.

All the classrooms were furnished with brand new blackboards, and chairs and desks for the children as well as for the teachers. There were new carpentry tools, too, for the vocational arts room. The home economics room was furnished with a dining table, sala set, a refrigerator, gas range, a TV and VHS player, new beds and mattresses.

The library got a new encyclopedia and many other new books, magazine shelves, as well as sports and science gadgets. All classrooms were also furnished with color-coded toilets for boys and girls.

The street leading to the school compound from the barangay road was also paved.

Reaping what she sowed

A Catholic chapel was also donated by Benter. It was built in a nearby lot donated by Violy's family.

The efforts of Violy and Benter were anchored on the design of School Aid of 1996, a program of the Department of Education. It provides a mechanism for private entities to assist public schools.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapuz congratulated Violy. He said Violy's good deed demonstrates what the private sector can do to help address the limited resources of the public education system.

A P13-million bonus

For Benter, helping Violy realize her dream was like giving a bonus to a treasured employee not only a good employee but also as a friend.

"Violy is more like family to me. She is trustworthy, responsible, industrious, and imaginative. Violy's 15 years of faithful service only deserves a reward. Rebuilding her hometown school is my gift to her," he said.

TRUE HEROES Violy and American businessman William F. Benter inaugurated the new school building under the Department of Education's Adopt-a-School program on March 30, 2007.

VIOLY'S DREAM COME TRUE The brand new Surnader Elementary School in Barac, Ilocos Norte.

A HOMETOWN COMMITMENT Violy (left), Benter and school officials in Barac

CONTINUED ON A32

American businessman and philanthropist William F. Benter said Violy was not just a good employee, she was 'family'

Will divorce cancel a foreign spouse's temporary green card?

IMFO
Lourdes Sandoval Francisco

SARAH WAS 15 YEARS OLD when she was granted a temporary "green card," or conditional resident status in the United States. Her mother, also a temporary green card holder, was married to a US citizen who had filed the immigration petitions on their behalf. Their cards were valid for two years.

One year after Sarah arrived in the US, her mother and her stepfather divorced. Sarah's mother filed a petition to acquire permanent resident status. However, because of the divorce, the petition was denied. With their green cards expired, both Sarah and her mother are facing deportation.

Sarah would like to stay in the US to continue her studies. What can she do?

A green card obtained through marriage of less than two years is valid for only two years. It is issued to validity the card holder and his or her children should file for the removal of conditional residence.

Generally, removal of conditions of residence (petition I-751) must be filed jointly by the US citizen and the foreign spouse and child. If the information and documentation are sufficient to prove good faith in marriage to the last two years, the joint petition is approved and the foreign spouse and child are given "permanent" or 10-year resident status.

A waiver petition

If the spouses are divorced, the green card holder can file a separate waiver petition. The US citizen spouse does not have to join this petition. The green card holder will be required to submit documents proving the grounds for the waiver. For example, that the experienced extreme hardship or battering.

It is important to show that it was a marriage in good faith before the divorce. Evidence may include joint ownership of property or joint tenancy at a common residence; commingling of financial resources; joint tax returns and affidavits of persons having knowledge of the good faith of the marriage.

Effect of Divorce

It is common in cases involving domestic abuse that the petitioner spouse uses the filing of the resident status petition as a weapon, against the vulnerable spouse. This becomes a move-all. Don't abandon when a minor child is involved.

In this scenario, the spouse and child whose green cards are expiring should go ahead and file a waiver petition.

In the particular case of Sarah and her mother, their petition for the removal of conditions was filed jointly with the US citizen spouse. But since they had already been divorced, the US Citizenship and Immigration Service denied their petition.

What a petition for joint removal of conditions is denied, the foreign spouse and child are usually subjected to deportation court proceedings. In Sarah's case, the spouse and child may re-file the I-751 petition.

Marriage in good faith

If there is sufficient evidence to show that the marriage was entered into in good faith, Sarah and her mother will most likely be granted their permanent resident cards.

The fact that the marriage lasted a set reason enough to deport them, if well-organized presentations of their case can save them their permanent resident cards.

While marriage to a US citizen is the fastest way to obtain a green card, it is also the most expedient way to get deported if the immigration service discovers that the marriage was fraudulent. Sometimes, it was entered into merely to derive the immigration benefits.

On the other hand, if the marriage was entered into by both sides in both a lovely and future together, then they have a good chance of leading off deportation and remaining in the US.

(Lourdes may be reached at lourdesfrancisco.com or at 8927127. Be sure to write about whatever US immigration issues, email Attorney's weekly "Pinoy Ako Amerika" aired on QTV every Sunday at 9 a.m.)

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence K. Quesa

LIKE A BIRD
Swiss pilot Yves Rossy, shown in this May photo, is the first man to cross the English Channel on jet-fueled wings. On Friday, he jumped off a plane some 2,300 meters above Calais in France, blasting across the channel at 300 kilometers per hour and reaching Dover in England 13 minutes later. He said he wanted to show: "It is possible to fly, a little bit like a bird." AFP

Still no bailout deal

Biggest bank failure, diving banking stocks add pressure to US Congress

NEW YORK—THE BIGGEST BANK FAILURE IN US history and nose-diving banking stocks added pressure on the US Congress to agree this weekend to a $700-billion financial bailout to breathe life back into credit markets.

That left the bailout as the unanimous issue that dominated battered early exchanges on Friday night in the first presidential debate between Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama in the run-up to the Nov. 4 election. (More details and story on Page A13.)

A second day of intense negotiations between top Democrats and Republicans failed to reach accord on how to structure a deal allowing the government to buy up toxic mortgages choking credit, but congressional leaders promised to stay all weekend until a compromise was reached.

Talks on Thursday collapsed in acrimony and roiled global markets. But President George W. Bush expressed optimism on Friday that Congress and the White House would come together on the proposal. Still, as US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson huddled in talks on Capitol Hill, global financial turmoil deepened.

Shortly after US stocks closed higher in hopes of a bailout deal before markets open on Monday morning, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi promised that Congress would work through the weekend and said progress was being made.

"The markets need a message from us ... that we understand time is important," Pelosi told reporters.

Just before Wall Street trading closed, The New York Times said Washington Mutual Inc., the US bank, was in early talks with Citigroup, but no deal may emerge.

Word is, Washington, the sixth largest US bank, recorded $6-percent on Friday before closing 27 percent lower on the possible deal. A subsequent report said several other banks were considering buying Wachovia.

Midwest regional bank National City Corp. slashed 29 percent and California's Downey Financial Corp. tumbled almost 46 percent amid a rising tide of home foreclosures and loan defaults that has spawned the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

In Europe, Belgian-Dutch financial group Fortis NV denied it had a liquidity problem after its shares tumbled more than 20 percent in a 14-year low. Later, Fortis ousted its country-listed executives.

US regulators seized savings and loan Washington Mutual Inc. late on Thursday, the biggest ever US bank failure, and sold its assets to JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Banks worldwide hoarded cash and showed a growing reluctance to lend, driving rates that institutions charge each other on loans on a record high in London.

"What you're going to see is the wrong get salvaged, and the seeds are going to die off," said William Smith, president of Smith Asset Management in New York.

Global money markets dried up, forcing increased injections of cash from central banks. With no relief in sight, investors flocked to the safety of cash and US government securities.

The view of many experts was that Congress had better reach a deal before the stock market's opening bell rings on Monday morning or there will be carnage on Wall Street. Reuters

Stay out, Pakistan tells US

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—PAKISTAN warned the US not to step across the Afghan border into its territory after a gun battle between the countries' allies that was praised by tribesmen as a victory against Washington.

As if to underline the point that this area has been al-Qaida and Taliban militants without American firepower, a top general said on Friday an offensive to counter Islamic preacher had killed more than 1,000 suspected insurgents and pushed the region toward the "stabilized" within two months.

Still, he also showed repeaters photos of militant turned cadavers and wreckage in Bajur, suggesting more tough fighting ahead in an area that is considered a likely hiding place for Osama bin Laden and other top al-Qaida leaders.

The violence that is roiling the Muslim, nuclear-armed nation showed no sign of letting up following last weekend's trade bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad that killed 53 people.

Pakistan's new civilian government is under mounting US pressure to crack down on militants, especially those harboring in the border area where they are believed to plan attacks on coalition troops in Afghanistan.

In recent months, Washington has launched a flurry of missile strikes and a ground assault on targets within Pakistan's territory, infuriating both military Pakistanis and their leaders. AP

Chinese astronaut takes historic walk in space

BEIJING—ASTRONAUT ZHAI ZHIGANG became the first Chinese man to walk in space on Saturday, clambering out of China's Shenzhou VII space craft in a technological feat that thrilled many around the world to marvel about.

The feat, the fruit of a multi-billion dollar space program that is bolstering China's claim to be a rising superpower, was also celebrated by the country's government in a year in which Beijing has staged a successful Olympics and coped with a devastating earthquake in Sichuan.

"This day, Chinese people's footprints will be left in space for the first time," stated a commentary by the official Xinhua news agency. "This will give the world yet something else to marvel about China in this extraordinary year of 2008."

The astronauts embarked on their walk after removing a door, called a hatch, from deep inside the spacecraft, Xinhua said.

Zhai's suit has 10 layers and takes up to 15 hours to assemble and put on. Reuters

The first spacewalk came 2005 after Shenzhou VII's predecessor, Shenzhou VI, carried two astronauts into orbit for five days.

China's Communist Party leaders are also celebrating the latest space mission, hailing the country's achievements in a year in which Beijing has staged a successful Olympics and coped with a devastating earthquake in Sichuan.

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Car bomb kills 17 in Damascus

DAMASCUS—A CAR BOMB EXploded near a Shiite shrine in southern Damascus on Saturday, killing 17 people and wounding 14 others, in one of the deadliest attacks in a dozen years, state television said.

The car packed with 200 kilograms of explosives blew up near a security checkpoint on a road to the Damascus international airport in an intersection leading to the Sayeda Zeinab neighborhood, it said.

All the victims were civilian passers-by, the channel added.

The attack came as 6:45 a.m. (11:45 a.m. Saturday in Manila) in the morning rush-hour in a teeming neighborhood, the network's news agency said, quoting a Syrian official.

Sayeda Zeinab is popular among Shiites from Iran, Lebanon and Iraq, who go there on pilgrimage to pray at the tomb of Zeinab, a granddaughter of the Prophet Mohammed.

On Wednesday the official news agency Sana reported that religious tourists to Shiite shrines generates around $40 million yearly.

A Syrian counterterrorism unit is investigating the attack, the agency said. The target of the bombing was not immediately known.

The blast is the worst in rock Syria since February when Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh was killed by a car bomb in Damascus.

The Lebanese Shiite militant group blamed Israel for the murder, but the Jewish state denied any involvement.

Mughniyeh, a shadowy figure on America's most wanted list for more than 20 years, was linked to suicide attacks against Western and Israeli targets in the 1980s and 1990s. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Ted Kennedy taken to hospital

BOSTON—Sen. Edward Kennedy, who has brain cancer, was taken by ambulance to a hospital on Friday near his Massachusetts vacation home after complaining of feeling ill but only mild nausea, a close friend said. A statement issued by the 76-year-old senator's office did not specify the reason for the change in medications. Sen. John Kerry said he fellow Massachusetts Democrat was well and planned to watch the evening's presidential debate between John McCain and Barack Obama. AP

Bush rejected Israeli strike on Iran

JERUSALEM—Israel gave serious thought earlier this year to a military strike on Iran's nuclear sites but was told by US President George W. Bush he would not support it, Britain's Guardian newspaper reported on Friday. Quoting what it called senior diplomatic sources who work for a European head of government, the Guardian said Olmert told Israel he did not accept its view that the time of his presidency, Mark Regev, spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said Israel preferred a diplomatic solution to the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. Reuters

Iran escapes UN sanctions

UNITED NATIONS—Six world powers handed the UN Security Council a toothless draft resolution on Iran's nuclear program on Friday after the United States, facing stiff Russian opposition, failed to secure agreement for new sanctions. Ambassador Alejandro Wolff of the United States, which like five major powers favors more sanctions, said the draft, calling on Iran to comply with previous resolutions demanding it suspend uranium enrichment, was an important "show of unity." Russia said it was not a time to consider new sanctions. Reuters

S. Africa's Zuma not yet off the hook

JOHANNESBURG—South African prosecutors pushed ahead with an appeal in the graft case of ANC leader Jacob Zuma on Friday, dashing ruling party hopes the prosecution would collapse with the ouster of President Thabo Mbeki. Mbeki, whose resignation followed a judge's suggestion of political interference in the case, was replaced as president on Thursday by Kgalema Motlanthe, who faces pressure from ANC allies to kill policy to the left. The National Prosecuting Authority made clear in a statement it would not let the Zuma case drop and said it would file an appeal with the Supreme Court of Appeal next week. A High Court judge had earlier this month dismissed bribery, fraud and other charges against the ANC leader. Reuters

Nuclear rules deal could break down

SEOUL—International talks on ending North Korea's nuclear arms ambitions could be heading for a breakdown after Pyongyang said it would restore cumbersome nuclear plant. South Korea's foreign ministry said on Friday. The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Wednesday the North was expelling UN monitors from its Soviet-era nuclear plant and plans to start reactivating it next week, rolling back a disarmament-for-aid deal and putting pressure on Washington. Reuters

Western Union announces One-ID policy

Following a recent Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) ruling that streamlined the identification requirements, the Western Union Company has announced that customers need to present only one photo identification document (ID) to receive money transfers in any of its 7,300* Agent locations across the Philippines. The BSP also expanded the list of acceptable IDs, allowing Western Union Agents to accept valid student photo IDs for non-voting/minor age students, employment IDs issued by private companies and government offices, and Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) IDs when customers transact with Western Union.

The official list of valid IDs accepted in all Western Union Agent locations includes the following:

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) ID
- Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) ID
- National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) clearance
- Police Clearance Certificate (Electronic)
- Postal ID
- Voter's ID
- Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS) e-Card
- Social Security System (SSS) Card
- Senior Citizen Card
- Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) ID
- Overseas Filipino Worker's (OFW) ID
- Seaman's Book
- Alien Certification of Registration (ACR)
- Firearms license
- Employment ID (Government and Private)
- Student ID (for non-voting/minor age students)
- Other IDs issued by the Government and its instrumentalities
- (Digitized hard plastic type)

Western Union has also lowered its domestic money transfer fees recently to as low as P19 for transactions amounting to P200 and below, enabling more customers in the Philippines to enjoy the fast, reliable and convenient Western Union® Money Transfer services.

*Network data as of June 30, 2008

Advertorial

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(2)#9 Marion Wilson of Jose Rizal U goes for a lay-up against Sam Shore of San Beda (r) (Game 2 of their best-of-three showdown for the NCAA.com's basketball crown. The Heavy Bombers defeated the Lions, 62-60, to force a winner-take-all match for the championship trophy. www.sanbeda.com

Barrios: No coaching conflict /A26

JRU mentor credits pal for victory

By Cedelf F. Tupas

WHILE HIS BOMBERS WERE DRAWING inspiration from Jose Rizal University legend Philip Cezar, coach Aldin Ybañez has been getting his from a mentor who shared the pain in one of the lowest points of his career.

Ybañez credited coach Joel Banal for the heavy Bombers' 62-60 squeaker over defending champion San Beda Friday that extended the NCAA.com's basketball finals series to a nail-biter, do-or-die game tomorrow.

"Coach Joel and I were together when Freddie Lim kicked us out of Talk 'N Text in the PBA," Ybañez recalled.

"He never left my side. He told me to pray the hardest. There's nothing technical about the win. We just prayed."

Lim, who is coaching San Beda for the second year, is still with the Phone Pals as team manager.

Banal, who mentored Ayenso in its 2002 UAAP title, was actually offered the JRU coaching job two years ago. He turned down the offer and recommended Vargas-Ybañez, who went on to steer the Bombers to a Final Four appearance last year.

Vargas-Ybañez said he hopes that his friendship with Banal will not fuel speculations that he is also getting advice from Banal's younger brother, Ray, who was the architect of San Beda's 2006 title campaign that ended the Lions' 20-year wait for a crown.

Most of Ray Banal's players from 2006 are still in the Lions' fold, including mid-season Most Valuable Player Sam Ekwe, Peng Taylor, Ogie Menor and JR Tagaras.

Eaglets forge golden double

By Jasmine Payo

ATENEO NOW HAS TWO REASONS to celebrate.

Taking their cue from the newly-crowned Season champs, the Blue Eaglets similarly completed a UAAP championship sweep by trampling on the Far Eastern Ruby Tamaraws, 73-60, yesterday at the Arena in San Juan.

The Eaglets captured their fifth overall title two days after the Eagles bagged their fourth crown to complete the first Season sweep of the two divisions.

"I'll be lying if I say there wasn't any pressure," said Eaglets coach Jamike Jarin. "Everybody was expecting us to win. It's not... it's about teamwork and the leadership of [Jaymee] Dumrique and the seniors. They delivered."

Finals Most Valuable Player Dumrique set the tone by burying 13 of his 18 points in the first half and the Eaglets coasted to a 69-46 quarter-end lead in the fourth period.

Leading the cheers from the gallery were mentor coach Norman Black and his men's squad led by MVP Rabeh Al-Hussaini and skipper Chris Tiu.

The Eaglets finished second last year behind the La Salle Zobel Junior Archers, who this time squandered their twice-to-beat edge against the Ruby Tans in the Final Four.

FEU settled for the women's crown series as the Lady Tamaraws earned back the University of the Philippines Lady Maroons, 52-48, to capture their first title in 10 years.

Sophomore guard Hasha Pilapsa collected 15 points, five rebounds and three steals to lead the Lady Tamaraws to a two-game Finals sweep.

Finals MVP Bernadette Mercado fired nine of her 11 points in the second half, including a key layup that lifted the Lady Tamaraws to a 44-39 lead with 2:12 minutes.

"It has always been a team concept for us," said coach Michael Oliver of his Lady Tamaraws, some of whom was chosen in this year's Mythical Team.

It's the first title for the Lady Tamaraws since winning three straight starting in 1996.

The scores:

First Game (Women)

FEU (52) - Pilapsa 15, Mercado 11, Ibrahim 9, Pedro 6, Reyes 4, Rivera 4, Serrat 2, Magcase 1, Bonifacio 1, Lastimosa 0, Arenas 0.

UP (48) - Cadiente 13, Valentino 13, Dadulo 8, Gaiosa 4, Yu 2, Gangan 2, Rabelo 0, Bautista 2, De Pasaje 0, Steven 0.

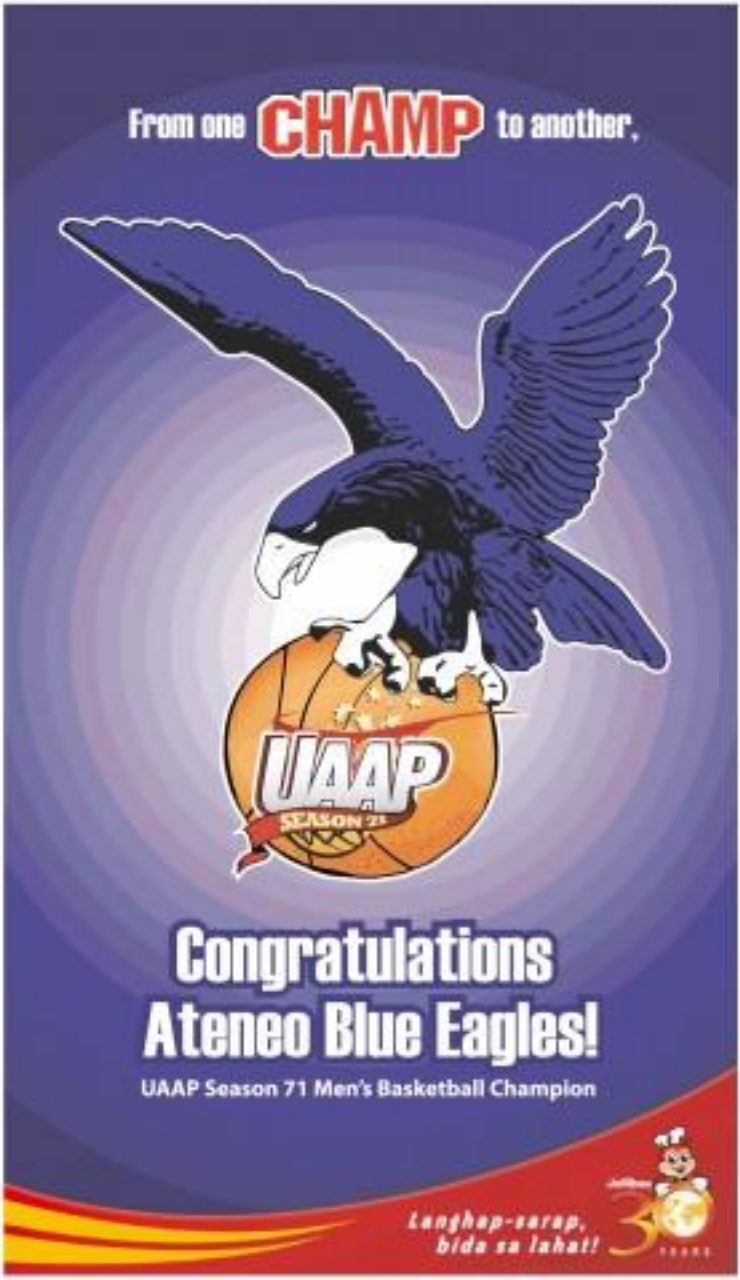
Quarters: 12-16, 31-31, 45-39, 52-48

Second Game (Juniors)

ATENEO 73 - J. Dumrique 18, Tungcab 12, Sharma 11, Banal 8, Pessumal 8, Enriquez 4, Pe 2, Romero 2, C. Tiu 0, Sanchez 2, Nieto 2, Rosas 2, Zamora 1, Gamboa 1, Zuno 0, Arrieta 0, Reyes 0.

UP (60) - Valencia 18, Abaya 11, Pacheco 7, Amante 7, Jimenez 6, Cortez 6, Santiago 4, Wade 2, Manaquiel 0, Baco 0.

Quarters: 25-18, 38-30, 69-46, 73-60



IN HUDDLE

Beth Cielo

Our apologies, but due to space constraints, Beth Cielo's column will not appear today. In Huddle will instead run tomorrow.—Ed

THE UFC INV

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We've got them

Ten years as a professional fighter, a world title and a slew of battles in and out of the octagon still wasn't enough to prepare former UFC light heavyweight champion, Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell, for his whirlwind visit to the Philippines earlier this week.

Thousands of avid screaming fans trooped to the SM Mall of Asia last Sunday to catch a glimpse of Chuck Liddell in action. Many were there as early as three hours before the show to see the UFC icon during the heart-pounding mixed-martial arts training exhibition. The crowd chanted his name and watched in awe as he sparred in the ring, answered questions and gamely posed with fans for pictures.

The UFC invasion of Manila was made possible by BALLS Skyroable channel 34, the official carrier of the UFC in the Philippines, and presenting sponsor COLT 45, the strong beer for real men. The Iceman was joined by UFC Chairman and CEO Lorenzo Fertitta, both of whom were astounded and grateful for the support and enthusiasm shown by the fans.

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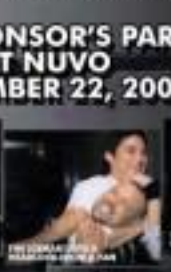

Sunday SPORTS

Ocean Fresh-Lyceum, TNT-Alaska win

OCEAN FRESH-LYCEUM TROUNCED VISCOM-CEBU, MINIPARIAN, 75-67, while Talk and Text-Alaska downed MJ-71, 92-83, to take the early lead in the MBL Danny Espiritu Cup basketball championship at the Ipakan gym in Intramuros. Manila Chris Cayabyab, Joseph Aloya and Earl Sugarskid led the Boone Tars-mentored Pirates to the victory.

Barrios: No coaching conflict

'PBA will only lend players to Guiao's national team'

By Maong B. Castillo

YENG GUIAO'S APPOINTMENT AS **head coach of the PBA-backed national five and the pursuit by the Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas of a Serbian to mentor a separate RP team will not conflict in any way because both will have separate mandates.**

This, commissioner Sonny Barrios yesterday said the tournees planning adding that the PBA "has no commitment" on lend players to any other national team that will not be coached by the fiery Red Bull rank runner Guiao.

"That's as far as I can recall our discussion [with the SBP]," Barrios said over the phone when asked if the PBA's obligation to help the SBP include sending players to international meets outside of the Olympic qualifying and the World Championships.

"Our commitment is to help the country make the World Championships," he added. "And for this reason that would try to go there to be coached by a FIBA-appointed personality."

Barrios was asked to clarify the issue since the SBP is finally pursuing Serbian coach Rajko Toroman, who steered him to the Fiba-Asia championship in Tsihuahua last year before guiding that same squad to an 11th place finish in the Beijing Olympics last month.

If Toroman signs up with the SBP, he would be tasked to prepare a team that could hopefully make it to the next Olympics, slated in London in 2012. His first tournament, if ever, would be the Southeast Asian Games scheduled late next year in Laos.

Barrios said that the PBA has no obligation to the SBP if and when Toroman decides that he wants players coming from the league who are not included in the pool, or team, that Guiao will come up with.

Chua lauds Yeng appointment

Meanwhile, Red Bull team owner George Chua said he is proud of the appointment of Guiao as national team coach.

"It's big member for me just knowing that Yeng Guiao's may not be able to devote his full time to our team, but we're nevertheless elated because he's going to perform his job in the interest of Philippine basketball," stated Chua.

Chua credited Guiao as the "architect of the Red Bull's ... rise to the PBA."

PBA COMMISSIONER Sonny Barrios (right) joins US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio during a basketball clinic in Marikina.

Puentevella tells solon: Let Pacman do his thing

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BACKING UP TRYING TO STOP THE DEC, a superfight between Manny Pacquiao and Oscar De La Hoya, Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday said his colleagues in the Lower House must first tackle more important issues like the reproductive bill, the 2009 budget and contaminated milk.

"Fights like that should not be relegated to the opinions of the Congress. There are a lot of people like Freddie Roach who rammed both fighters and are in better position to speak about it," Puentevella told the Inquirer yesterday.

He said he has already discussed the matter with Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, who authored a bill calling for the cancellation of the fight pitting the two biggest names in the sport at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

"In the first place we have no jurisdiction over it as the fight is sanctioned by the Nevada Athletic Sports Commission," added Puentevella. "With all due respect to Rep. Rodriguez, let's just deal with more important issues."

Puentevella, also a vice president of the Philippine Olympic Committee and a close friend of Pacquiao, said his will just "invite" Rodriguez to watch the fight at stagside.

Puentevella said, the proposed bill "will only dampen the training of our national hero, Manny Pacquiao, who already said he will train very hard for his biggest fight."

He said hearing reports who put up the fight should know better if indeed Pacquiao's life would be in danger.

No POC hand in any NSA dispute, says Joseph

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITtee will not meddle in leadership disputes among national sports associations, special after the Nov. 28 elections.

POC deputy secretary general Jinkee Joseph said yesterday that actions on Mitra-ram's internal problems might be misinterpreted as "election related" which the body is trying to avoid.

So far, there are no pending cases in the arbitration committee, according to Joseph.

However, the Philippine Hockey Federation is under the after a election led by national head Asesh Jewel Chan urged an election yesterday.

Chan, was elected president by club members who, according to him, nominated close to 70.

PBA incumbent president, former Hon. Lady Ming Barton has earlier dismissed the elections by tackling a letter to the POC and coming up with advertisement in newspapers against the breakaway group.

Chan admitted that there were no POC representatives during the elections but added that they will just submit the minutes of the meeting to the Olympic body by Monday.

POC president Peping Cojuangco is resuming for a second term against dethe Macapagal of shooting.

Incumbent chair Bobsy Aseoguela of tambourists is separately seeking another term under the ticket of Macapagal, which will pit him against tennis heart vice president Monico Puentevella who is reportedly running under Cojuangco's wing. — Allan Anthony Reyes

Pagunsan falls five behind after a 70

OSAKA—JAVIC PAGUNSAN COULD still salvage two moving rounds, settling for a seven-par 70 Saturday to drop to 5-o-ten-par 70 Saturday to drop to 5-under-par 208.

The 30-year-old bomber from Bicolnd, who started the day in a three-way deadlock for second place after rounds of 68-68, posted a three-round total of 203 and trailed Japanese cobombers Ayumu Yano and Hideto Tsuboi by five strokes.

Frankie Miñoza was the next best Filipino but at 206 after a 68. Artemio Murakami (T-3) was two strokes behind at 208 with Angelo Que (down in the standings at 211 after a 73.

Yano, chasing a second consecutive victory, posted a flawless five-under-par 65 at Daiichi Country Club's West Course for a three-day total of 12-under-par 198.

Tsuboi fired an equally superb 66 to give himself a chance of a victory against Yano in the $1.65 million event sponsored by the Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour.

PAGUNSAN

Marcelo, Alvarez top karting series

MARCELO

MEANWHILE... SAN Miguel Corporation-Mitsuvolo Racing's Stefano Marcelo and John Alvarez posted break-through triumphs recently in the sixth leg of the 2008 Shell Helix Karting Super Series at the Fuentes land Kart Track in Pasay City.

Marcelo, who just turned 16, led from start to finish to sweep both the Formula 125 Open Senior and the ROK Senior classes.

The victory was enough for Stefano to virtually capture his first back-to-back Karter of the Year award with a total of 500 points.

Stefano stopped up the 24-lap final race in 16 minutes and 04.63 seconds or by 2.984 seconds ahead of runner up John Escalla.

"One down, four to go," said Stefano who made it among the world's 10 best karters in last year's outing.

Alvarez cushed his first triumph in the ROK Junior Expert class, scoring back-top favorites Jan Morales and Nicky Morales.

SPORTSWATCH

RP's Clare gains muay thai finals

BEIJING—TEAM PHILIPPINES IS SURE TO BRING HOME AT LEAST a medal from the XIV Taiwa World Sport for All Games here.

Muay thai fighter Roland Clare made the possible yesterday by reaching the finals of the lightweight division. Clare, a world champion in 2004, will direct for the gold medal against a fighter from Finland, one of 65 countries represented in the muay thai event.

Tagaytay City Mayor and vice-mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino joined Clare for his "impressive performance."

Other muay thai fighters on the RP team are Rommick Pulalon, Jonathan Polonan, Ricalene Austria, May Lilac, Mehol Sotiang, Jay Rodriguez and Jay Ronald Gregorio.

"I'm surprised I did not have medals," said Tolentino.

Mighty Sports-San Juan rules Inter-City

MIGHTY SPORTS-SAN JUAN (8-0) became the first champion of the Inter-City basketball tournament by scoring a stirring 84-81 win over Bancard Manila E-Volley in the San Andrew gym in Manila.

The San Juan cheerleaders of Mayor JV Ejercito hooted on Rikish Reyes, Butch Dumanguin and Mayjay Fenix to frustrate the title bid of the Big City rogues.

"The boys really played well, especially on the defensive end and thanks for their gritty performance, we made another history," said Mayor Ejercito. "We hope for another successful partnership with Mighty Sports."

Mighty Sports-San Juan won the best-of-three title series, 2-1. They won Game 1, 71-68, but were denied of a sweep after the Big City boys bounced back in Game 2 at the San Juan City gym.

Fenix redeemed himself from an erratic shooting in Game 2 to lead Mighty Sports-San Juan with 24 points, including a key basket in the payoff period that sparked the decisive run.

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Sunday BIZ
Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Pinoy-Aussie execs in Australia

Lawyer and investment banker talk about life in Sydney and doing business in Manila

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

TRIPHE OPW AND THE USUAL image that comes to mind is a Filipina working as a DH or domestic helper abroad or a Filipino seaman plying the different oceans and seas.

Not known to many is that there is a big segment of Filipinos working as professionals or overseas who are making waves in their current countries of residence.

The Inquirer recently got to know two such Filipinos in Australia who are occupying top positions in the land down under.

Beyond the Australian dream

Millie Tolan was a young accountant who applied for migration to Australia in the early 1980s.

She says some friends had applied for migration and were rejected so they urged her to try. She was accepted.

"I did not know anything about Australia when I came," she recalls.

Some 25 years later, Millie is a partner in a multinational Australian law firm, Thomson Playford Corrs, the field of expertise is tax law, one of the most complex legal areas, not just in Australia but in the world.

Millie got her break in Australia courtesy of a client she had when she was still employed in a law firm in Manila. She was with the finance department then and that client who was based in Australia told her to look him up if she ever came to Sydney.

She arrived in Sydney on a Sunday and immediately rang her client the next day to take him up on his offer. Eight years and then, he called her: "When can you start?"

A workaholic with a passion to learn, Millie pursued a Masters of Commerce in Legal Studies and Tax from the University of New South Wales. She was able to get credits for some of her MBA courses at the Ateneo but because she was studying part time, she finished the program in six years.

"I had a good employer. He allowed me two afternoons a week to go to the university," she says.

Not content with her postgraduate degree, she pursued a Bachelor of Laws in the same university also on a part-time basis.

On top of her studies, she worked out five times a week.

"With my type of work, you sit and read. There is no physical activity. A lot of exercise kept me fit and sane," she explains.

Millie, however, developed her solemn mien over it today, she is the only Asian partner in her law firm. She is also the first female president of the Australia-Philippines Business Council Inc., an association aimed at helping firms or businesses do business in the two countries.

She also did not want to delve too much into difficulties she experienced as an Asian building a career in a foreign land. Her simple says that hard work helps.

She says, "Australians are frank. You have to understand the difference in the culture."

While many Australians are still working on their Australian dream, Millie has already achieved it. Still single, she lives in a 660-square-meter home in one of the exclusive areas of Sydney, plus the room-our-a-smaller home.

But still, she takes the bus or the train to go to work and to meetings.

And like many Filipinos who spend their careers in foreign lands, she hopes to retire in her hometown in Isabela.

Seeking investments in the Philippines

Eduardo Alcordo Jr. is a Filipino-Australian investment banker, complete with suspenders and pin-stripe suit with his

ALCORDO

Half a century of 'underdressing' men

Genomal brothers talk about Jockey's early beginnings in the country

By Samuel M. del Rosario

HOW A PARTNERSHIP BEtween two companies here kept an underwear brand the topselling player in the country for more than 50 years is a story that the Genomal brothers are fond of telling.

For consistently capturing a quarter of the entire market through the years, underwear brand Jockey has to owe its enabling link of products to thank for keeping the brand "interesting and exciting" for its customers, says Hamesh.

Hamesh is one of the four Genomal brothers who continue to run GOVI Manufacturing Industries Inc., the only manufacturer and distributor of Jockey underwear in the country since 1958. The other three brothers who help out in the business are Hari, Ashok and Sunder.

Jockey and GOVI recently celebrated 50 years of successful partnership.

"This is the result of the meticulous attention to quality service to the Filipino consumer and the preservation of the brand image over the years," GOVI managing director Hamesh tells the reporters on the sidelines of the celebration.

He recalls his elders telling him first hook in the 1920s, when the Filipinos first got to know of the Jockey underwear through American civilians and US armed forces wearing them, it was the only brand known for men's underpinnment. It is for this reason, he says, why the word "jockey" was adopted in Filipino and is still used today as a term to mean men's briefs. Much like Coke means soft drinks to Colgate means toothpaste.

While GOVI, then still known as T. Libarios & Co. I, started importation of Jockey products in 1948, right after World War II, it was not until 1958 that the partnership between the two companies were formalized.

In 1980 (when the government imposed import restrictions on all garments and textiles to promote domestic industrialization), the first component formed a licensing agreement to manufacture and distribute Jockey, making the Philippines one of the oldest licensees for the brand, the oldest being England.

BAHRETA: Hari and Ashok

"This is running since we all of us. I see a strong future for the brand and for the partnerships in the next 50 years," says Jockey International international division president Timothy Wheeler.

It's good that the influence of the United States in the Philippines is strong, he says, that's why there's a certain familiarity when it comes to the Jockey brand when they first came in.

Though new players have since come in, Wheeler says they are confident of Jockey's quality and dominance in the country. "We had reached brand in hand to make Jockey the most successful and most sought after 'underwear brand. We can only get better," he says.

While the United States is still Jockey's strongest market, Wheeler says the Philippines, next to India, is one of the more active markets in Asia. There's staying something, given that Jockey is available in more than 100 markets worldwide, he says.

Though passed for bringing many "firsts" in the country's underwear industry—such as the first colored men's underwear in 1970 and the introduction of Jockey "Shorts" (underwear sold in boxers) in 1973—Hamesh can only look forward to what's in store for the brand.

Among the developments in the Jockey business, Hamesh says, is the picking up of their women's apparel line, which had in the last year saw sales grow 90 percent. Though they started offering items for their female customers back in 1989, he says, they are making a more aggressive advertising this time around.

"Our focus on our ladies' line is on comfort, not on high fashion," he says. A new range of sports bra with their signature stretch material, he said, is expected to be available by the end of the year.

While the Jockey brand has been associated mainly with men's underwear, Hamesh says they do not see any problem with brand identity or brand loyalty when it comes to their more traditional male customers. In fact, the husbands now enjoy buying their clothes along with their wives, he says.

Hamesh says they want to see more growth in their female apparel line, which already makes up 20 percent of GOVI's business. This is because they see a promising symbol with the women, who, unlike their male counterparts, really set time and effort to purchase their underpinnments.

Jockey remains strongest in the A, B and C markets, Hamesh says.

Today, Hamesh, Hari, Ashok and Sunder continue to run GOVI, guided by the values and principles instilled upon them by their late father Yoshi and Librada Genomal, who founded the company.

In the future, Wheeler said, the patrons can look forward to more Jockey products catering to a more younger crowd. But that does not mean they are moving away from their more traditional or classic flavor, which made Jockey the household name it is today.

Town finds hope in feeding program

From page B1

The child's weight, she explained, is an indicator of the nutritional status. However, in Colangaan, most children were found to be "below or very low" on the nutritional level, which is equivalent to 2nd degree malnutrition.

The group also discovered no breakfasts among children in the area.

Lenny Pantangaya, who takes care of her 5-year-old granddaughter Reena, says the feeding program helped her make ends meet.

She works, like most of her peers in the barangay, in the "harvest season" (sugarcane farm) and earns P150 for a day's work.

Every day, she and Reena take a 30-minute walk to the school in Barangay Tangan where the feeding program is held.

"Years no longer afford to allot a budget for Reena's milk, given that there are other expenses at home," she said.

It is only through the program that her granddaughter is able to drink milk, that is why she does not hesitate to take a day off whenever she is scheduled to cook at the feeding center.

According to Josilito Bolaños, ECP executive director, 67 percent of Colangaan's student population was found to be malnourished in 2005. This went down to 33 percent in 2008.

CHILDREN at the feeding center in Barangay Tangan in Calbiga, Samar

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

While the partner foundation, he assures ECP in Calbiga, provides the hot meals, Mead Johnson Nutritionals makes its products available to Reena who ensure afford them through the feeding program. But in 2008, the company initiated the donations of computers to public schools in addition to the milk feeding.

It recently gave 19 computers to the Calbiga National High School.

"We only had eight computers before that would only accommodate a group (from a class of 50 students) once a month," one teacher said as they receive the computer units.

He said the school has over 700 students and the donated computers really mean something to them.

"Feeding Hope 1 is an entirely feeding but it is tied up to education," Villamor said.

Since the program targets children from 3 to 5 years old or at their formative stage, the feeding program aims to give children "the best start in life."

"How can one child perform well (in school) if he is malnourished," she added.

Feeding Hope has fed over 12,000 children in Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Pinoy-Aussie execs in Australia

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capitals embroidered on its chest, who is looking to invest in energy in the Philippines.

He is a director of First Pacific Capital (Indochina) Pty Ltd., an Australian investment banking firm with holdings in China and the Philippines. It was set up in 2005 by Alcantara and Australian investors.

He studied high school in the Philippines after finishing his elementary education at the Jose Abad Santos Memorial School. He lived with relatives while in the United States.

Some college, he spent a couple of years at the University of the Philippines but eventually went to Australia because "you get high-quality education but cheaper" than in the United States. Graduate school for his MBA, however, found him back in the United States.

He gave Wall Street a try after his MBA but Australia beckoned. It was compelling to go back to Australia, he says, citing the opportunities that came once citizen to the continent than in New York.

He joins that in Australia, with $800 million, you can move the market by one to two percent. In Wall Street, he says, you may have $1 billion and you still barely make a dent.

First Pacific which has about eight power plants under construction, was one of the bidders for National Transmission Co., which owns and operates the transmission lines in the country. It qualified up to the second round of bidding but decided not to pursue it.

He did not say why the group did not pursue the bid, but says that : "You bid at your own risk but the major burden to the cost of doing business is if the project is not awarded."

Although, he acknowledges the difficulties of doing business in the Philippines, so did anyone from the usual conglomerate of investors—bureaucracy, uncertain policies and directions—Alcantara says. "the Philippine experience is not all that bad. There are risks but there are returns. We are it so an expensive place to get into but the returns are good."

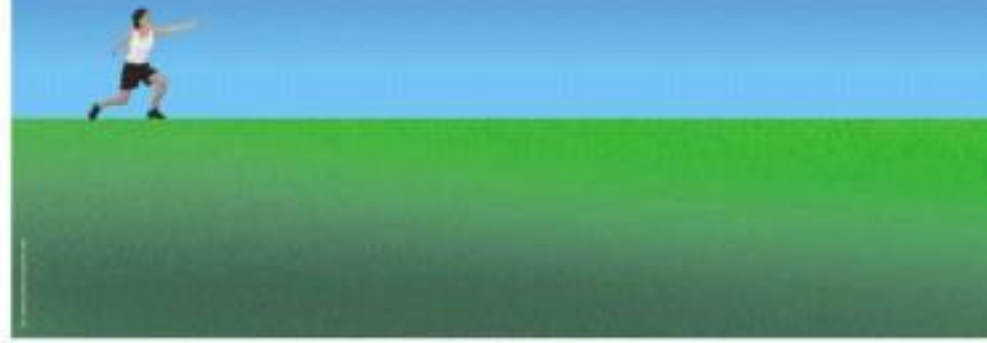
First Pacific Capital recently set up a biomass power plant in Quezon, Luzon.

He says that that is the first venture into indigenous fuel (as) and he says there are plans to put up a similar plant in the Philippines.

"The issue is fuel security, ability. What we're looking at is the new fuel to invest," he says.

But he remains bullish about opportunities in the Philippines, and with First Pacific taking as the symbol of the new house, which means "as troubled times the sea forms itself float", it is now the best time to go to the Philippines.

(The author was invited to Australia by its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade under its International Media Visitors Program last Sept. 14-28.)



Shoppers to spend less, buy practical holiday gifts

NEW YORK—THE CHRISTMAS trees are lined up at Macy's, the ornaments are on sale. The retailer is promoting big discounts and it is no overstatement.

Not only does Christmas appear to be coming over earlier, but it looks like the holiday has continued uninterrupted since June 2000 as US retailers flood shoppers with e-mails and flyers for sales events.

Dozens of special deals are offered their advertisements, hiring a retail tool many from retailers as they head into what could be the most difficult holiday season since 1991, marketing experts say.

"It's the definition of insanity," said Ryan Mathews, chief executive of advertising agency Toy New York, referring to retailers' year-round reliance on promotions to generate sales.

"It's a classic case of commoditizing what you do."

In the most recent spate of deals, an e-mail from Macy's upscale Bloomingdale's department store chain on Tuesday touted 25 percent off for three days only, while one from Arden's Garden division offered 25 percent off on certain merchandise, and Gap Inc.'s Old Navy chain offered $20 off a $75 purchase until Sept. 25.

"We are fond of saying that in a downturn, all retailers become discount retailers," said Scott Krugman, spokesperson for the National Retail Federation.

But advertising executives and analysts say retailers are fixing shoppers who are focused on spending less, buying functional or meaningful gifts, and patronizing stores they know empathy with their customers.

"It's going to be a more practical season than we've ever seen," said Ann Berlanti of advertising firm Young & Laramore.

THE FINANCIAL meltdown is exciting Americans just as the retail industry prepares for the critical holiday season that was already expected to be the smallest in almost two decades.

The day after Thanksgiving, known by retailers as "Black Friday" because it historically was the day when shoppers can turn retailers' bottom lines in black from red, has traditionally marked the start of the holiday season with eye-popping sales.

But last year, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. cut prices on hot toys at the end of September, and retailers poured online deals on Thanksgiving day to kick off the holiday shopping season even before the turkey was carved.

After Thanksgiving, retailers like Toys "R" Us, JC Penney Co. Inc. and Gap Inc. promoted Black Friday-type limited-time sales into December.

Despite the deluge of special offers, 2007 holiday sales rose a less than expected 3 percent, the worst sales performance in the years.

Sales and specials continued into 2008, becoming a seasonal tactic by retailers trying to entice consumers into buying more than the most essential goods and services.

But consumer spending remains weak, due to higher food and fuel prices, mounting job losses and a deteriorating US housing market.

Demanding discounts

Analysts expect the upcoming Black Friday weekend to be marked by a binary of extreme deals and discounts.

But Allan Fensel, founder of women's insights marketing firm SheSpeaks, said shoppers are craving more from retailers.

"It's not just about the 'Come in and get $15 off' because then are going to be tens of those offers and there and more, as you know that," she said. "People are trying to ... figure out how they can stretch their dollars or create an experience to oppose to buying stuff."

That could mean, for example, consumers throwing parties around a holiday movie or gathering and pairing back on the number of gifts they buy.

In a recent SheSpeaks poll, almost 50 percent of respondents said they would spend less this holiday, up from nearly 30 percent who answered the same way last year.

Fensel said the climate has emboldened shoppers.

"They feel like pricing is actually negotiable and when they go in to retailers, they can negotiate the price."

Advertising executives and analysts say shoppers will also gravitate toward stores that convey a sense that they feel consumers' pain. They cited as examples Wal-Mart's current ad campaign that emphasizes how saving money in its stores can help shoppers "live better."

"There are so many tire-less retailers," Young & Laramore's Berlanti said. "How do you make your experience that much better? It's trying to figure out that mix of practicality and dreaming that people want during the holidays."

Reuters

Creating little China in Manila mall

BARGAIN HUNTING AND HAGgling are shopping practices that are typically Pinoy. But even foreigners who frequent the country and get to pick up this practice start liking it and even become experts at it.

With things getting global these days, a true creative mind who has "seen" the world thought of "recapturing" a little of Shanghai into one of the Philippines' popular shopping places in the metro. The Dutch mind of Yonchen Mall - Marketing and Sales Vice President Bernardo "Ding" Baptista, whose itchy feet have taken him to many will be launching on Oct. 17 Little Shanghai in the mall. His international stint in the Big Apple and travels in Europe and Asia gave him a reservoir of concepts that come in handy when planning projects for malls and other establishments.

This executive's acumen in mall management has been greatly enriched by his decadelong career at the Ayala-Corinco.

Little Shanghai at the Yuchengco Mall is not just a conceptual rendition in terms of design: executives feel also in terms of the very essence of its operations, from detail to detail. Add to the "taste of a part of China" the enjoyable shopping Pinoy practices of discount hunting and haggling and you get the most out of the ideal shopping experience—the best of two worlds. Customers will be treated to a festive shopping experience.

ESPIRITU

Starting Oct. 17 at the 2nd floor of Yuchengco Mall Chinese 1, 55 malls will showcase an array of the finest Shanghai products at very reasonable prices Chinese silk, carpets, and decorative items, to name a few.

The gateway to the site is heralded by a giant mockup of authentic-looking Shanghai motif in blazing red-and-gold designs. Shanghai is China's richest financial district with great modernity executed without losing that old Oriental touch.

Explains made provisions for expansion—his sequel to Little Shanghai coming up in time for Christmas shopping are Little Beijing and Little Xiamen—near Little Shanghai. Thus, the entire 2nd floor premises of Yuchengco Mall Chinese Building will eventually be transformed into a Little China with the best elements of Chinese culture featured and a splattering of great Pinoy shopping thrills.

Meat, fish processing seminar

THE GOLDEN TREASURE Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day meat and fish processing seminar at the Nestle Building, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City on Oct. 4, Saturday from 8:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and costing.

Participants will be taught how to make tocino, chicken longganisa, Chinese (canton) sausage, embutido, chicken nuggets, chicken and pork hams, fishball, fish sticks, fish fillet, fish burger, bangus deboning, etc. Bonus courses include making corned beef and squid ball.

Participants will receive certificates of training right after the seminar. Lunch and snack will be served, and all the materials will be provided.

For questions, please call 4367825, 9126105, and 4111977.

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When health is truly wealth

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TACLOBAN CITY – FOR MILLIONS of poverty-stricken Filipinos like 56-year-old Victoria Bruno, health is wealth, indeed.

A sound mind and a strong body are as much a capital as saved money and skills for those small entrepreneurs because once they get sick, they immediately lose the little income they badly need to keep food on the table and shoes on the back of their children.

For Mama Viely, the daily income from selling lumpiang shanghai (vegetable rolls) to neighboring schools and offices comes up to about P800, which she uses to keep her small business growing and provide the needs of her three children, one of which is still in college.

"If I get sick, I won't earn. We won't have money for food and other daily needs," Mama Viely tells the reporters in Waray.

The single mother felt that her income would shrink when she contracted pneumonia and had to stay in the provincial hospital for two days. Not only was she not able to work, her medical bill also ran up to P12,000.

Fortunately for Mama Viely, she was a regular contributor to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth), so she only had to borrow P4,000 from friends and relatives to cover her bills. PhilHealth paid for the rest.

"I don't know what I would have done had I not been a member of PhilHealth. I would not have been able to raise the entire P12,000. I would have been too ashamed to borrow that amount from others," Bruno likely agrees.

She remains a proud card-carrying member of PhilHealth, paying about P300 a quarter to ensure her benefits. And now she knows first hand how PhilHealth can be a real help in times of need, she says she encourages her neighbors and relatives to sign up to become PhilHealth members.

Likewise spreading the good news of PhilHealth membership is 34-year-old Shirley Cesario who helps her husband provide for their family by selling snacks like fried bananas and rice cakes.

Cesario says in an interview in her small home here that she had been a member of PhilHealth for less than a year when her second child was brought to Bethany Hospital here because of a ruptured appendix.

Her bill came up to P30,000 but PhilHealth shouldered P19,000 of the amount, which was a big help to the family.

"I never really expected to see my

MAMA Viely cares from selling lumpiang shanghai

PhilHealth is a potent tool in providing medical insurance to the less privileged

PhilHealth benefits. But when I did, I say glad I became a member. It was such a big help," says Cesario, a mother of four children, whose husband earns about P600 a day from driving a tricycle.

To think that they have not even considered becoming members of PhilHealth until they joined the Tayray sa Kauswagan Inc., a micro-finance institution from which they get capital for their small and micro enterprises.

As members of TSKI, they pay P25 a week or so into PhilHealth here, often through its Kalinangan Sigaw Atbp Mga Kaya sa PhilHealth Incentive (Kasapi).

Through Kasapi, PhilHealth partners with organized groups such as cooperatives, microfinance institutions, nongovernment organizations and rural banks in Samar and recruits enrollment in social health insurance among the informal economy workers.

Through the group enrollment program, it becomes easier for members of self-help groups and microfinance institutions such as TSKI to maintain contributions in PhilHealth, which has been trying since its inception in 1995 to reach out to the uninformal workers.

Kasapi is being implemented in Regions 1, 3, 4-A, 8, 10, 11 and 13 and now has 12 organized group partners, including the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutual Benefit Association, Incorporated (help Multipurpose Cooperative), Green Bank and Taliya sa Pag-asilad Inc.

The German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), Germany's international development arm, has been helping PhilHealth strengthen the program since 2005 as it believes that it is a potent tool in providing medical insurance to the less privileged.

At the same time, Kasapi helps strengthen PhilHealth as an institution as it is assured of a continuous flow of additional regular contributions.

GTZ supported PhilHealth in the development of the concept and the implementing rules and regulations. It also subsidized the production of information materials to help the microfinance agencies and PhilHealth officers in promoting the program.

GTZ program manager Dr. Michael Adelhardt tells the bureaus that uninformal workers have initially reluctant to pay for their PhilHealth membership as it compares with their other basic needs, such as food and shelter.

However, through the Kasapi program, they realize that health is as much a priority as health and education.

"We aim to to sell them in the concept that the money they contribute goes to someone in need if they are not using it," Adelhardt explains, "Those who stay healthy will help those who are sick."

He says GTZ is bullish on the Kasapi program as he believes that by going through groups, there is a higher possibility of consistent contribution, which is the main problem with individual contributions.

GTZ data show that the program is already bearing fruit in Eastern Visayas where its assistance is concentrated, as enrollment has increased by 13 percent last year.

But there is still a long way to go as national coverage is just at 74 percent as of 2008 with poverty now given to increasing coverage to informal economy workers, most of whom have their own businesses like sari-sari stores.

Adelhardt hopes that coverage will soon become universal as increased contributions will ultimately redound to increased benefits to members like Mama Viely.

Bantay Kalikasan saves Pasig River

AFTER THE SAVE THE LA MESA WATERshed Project's success, Bantay Kalikasan under ABS-CBN Foundation Inc. takes on its next "save the water" campaign...the Pasig River Rehabilitation Project.

In the recent general membership meeting of the Metropolitan Association of the Philippines, which this year's theme was "Investors and the Environment: The Possibilities", Gina Lopez, managing director of ABS-CBN Foundation, discussed the current problems confronting the rehabilitation of Pasig River. Despite all attempts to save it for the past years, sources of the waste problem are relentlessly polluting the river. An estimated 85 percent of Pasig's waste comes from households, 10 percent from the industrial sector, and 5 percent from mobile sources. Currently, Metro Manila is reportedly producing as much as 7,000 cum; or 11 cubic meters of trash per day. Out of which, about 1,500 tons is dumped daily (and illegally) on private lands, creeks, rivers and the Manila Bay. Sadly, it is because of this gargantuan problem that Pasig River is alternately known as the "dumping ground" of industrial sectors and almost all establishments surrounding it.

To give precious life back to the river, Bantay Kalikasan together with all its partner agencies and organizations proposed strategies of controlling the pollution from the source. This plan entails the clean up of all the 47 tributaries or other channels flowing into the main river. As its first step, Bantay Kalikasan will aim to strengthen the Clean River Zones (CRZ) started by the Pasig River Development Office (PRDO) composed of communities residing near the tributaries.

To achieve The Clean River Zone's vision of zero trash input, solid waste management facilities will be placed in the area to ensure proper segregation, composting and recycling of biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes. The CRZ communities are also expected to generate income from manufacturing products like pails, table tops, chairs, tiles, and bricks out of recycled plastic. Addressing the problem on wastewater, Manila Water and Maynilad Inc. is agreed to give free desludging services for all households in the CRZ areas. In addition, Bantay Kalikasan proposes that the local government units create an adequate resettlement program coupled with viable livelihood programs for the informal settlers along the tributaries, in order for the project to succeed. Bantay Kalikasan is now working on the effective monitoring and enforcement of the project.

FINEX PAYS COURTESY CALL ON ING BANK

The 9 Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) officers and members led by 2007-2008 Finex President Rosemarie Ong (left on ING Bank to reaffirm credit facilities and to express their commitment to the ING-Finex's search for CEO of the Year. President of the visiting team (seated from left, from left) Rosanna R. Ibarra, chair, CEO awards committee; Consuelo U. Ferrer, immediate past president; Ong; and country manager of ING Manila, and Past Pres. Gonzalez, CFO awards committee consultant. Behind them are (standing, from left) Gregorio U. Kilayko, Finex liaison director, CEO awards committee; Tessa Zubiaga, managing director and head of ING Investment Management Philippines; Leonardo D. Fernandez, Finex president. Manuel B. Tabal III, newly appointed managing director and head of ING wholesale banking clients for Asia and Mr. Bob Dingra, overall chair, CEO awards committee. The country's next top chief financial officer (CFO) will be honored by the 181 senior Finex and ING Bank/ING Manila executives at the awards Nite, jointly with ING. Launched the award last year in order to recognize the important and critical role IT plays in today's fast-changing, complex and evolving financial landscape globally.

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Town finds hope in feeding program

By Marice Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CALAMBAN, LAGUNA – Through the efforts of community leaders and well-meaning groups, malnourished preschool children here will soon be a thing of the past.

The town is nearing the goal, according to Calamban Mayor Sophia Palanca who says that the town's rank moved down from third in 1997 to 8th in 2000 and to 20th this year in terms of number of malnourished children.

Considering to the decline in malnutrition is Feeding Hope, a program started in 2002 by Kinang ng Kalaki, a nongovernment organization.

"It really was a big help for us," she said.

Kinang partnered with Mead Johnson Nutritionals, private organizations, Department of Social Welfare and Development and the local government to sustain the six-month feeding program conducted in areas where poverty and malnutrition are evident.

In Calamban, the Enrique Zobel Foundation (EZF) was the program's ground partner.

It was brought to the municipality the same year and has covered 15 out of its 21 barangays, with 36,464 beneficiaries each area.

"We first weigh the children and target the areas where malnourishment is highest," Palanca said.

Comprehensive

The program also combines deworming before the actual feeding begins.

Parents take the children to feeding centers from Monday through Saturday where cereals, snacks and milk are served. The last meals are described "cheap to prepare but are highly nutritious."

Volunteer nutritionists set the menu, depending on the children's malnutrition level.

At the same time, parents are given educational assistance on proper nutrition, healthy food preparation, hygiene, gardening and basic financial planning.

They are taught how to prepare the meals at the feeding centers, which they can replicate in their own homes.

Ricky Vitorino, founder of the Kinang ng Kalaki, said "the Feeding Program is just the start of a community building."

He explained it is not "a one-time handout-aid feeding effort" but a comprehensive program where it is continuously monitored and sustained.

Nicolas said they are following an international standard on nutrition

TURN TO

30th year of Family Rosary Crusade

THE STA. CATALINA COLLEGE IN Legazpi, Manila is holding its Family Rosary Crusade season from Sept. 26 to Oct. 4 at the SCC Chapel. The schedule of this year's celebration, theme and Mass celebrants for each day are as follows:

Sept. 26—"Rosary: A Way towards Devout Transformation"—Fr. Alfredo Sebado, SVD;

Sept. 27—"Rekindling the Value of the Rosary in the Hearts of the Youth of Today"—Fr. Filemon dela Cruz, OP;

Sept. 28—"Learning with Christ and Mary through Witnessing to Truth"—Fr. Crescel Tancontan, OP;

Sept. 29—"Being Conformed to Christ with Mary"—Fr. Andrew Barayuga, DBA;

Sept. 30—"Rosary: Threshold of Life"—Fr. Franklin Beltran, OP;

Oct. 1—"Proclaiming Christ with Mary in Becoming a Church of the Poor"—Fr. Clarence Marquez, OP;

Oct. 2—"Serving Christ with Mary in Building a Just Society"—Fr. Christian Bornido, OCarm;

Oct. 3—"Following Christ With Mary in Becoming a True Disciple"—Fr. Quirino Pichappan, OP.

Oct. 4—"Mary and the Rosary, Our Guide in Building a Civilization of Love"—Bishop Emigracion Ragaza Jr., SJD and Isabel Regina, Blessing, Despedida Ala Virgen—Msgr. Vicente Bonsen.

The procession will start from the SCC Campus, right to Legazpi Street, left to Rizal Boulevard, right to Ma. Orosa Street, left to G. Tuason, left to J. Rizarde, left to Earnshaw, left to Blumentritt, left to Landicahuli, right to Jhocson, left to Legazpi, then back to SCC Campus.

Everybody is invited to join this year's SCC novena and procession.

IN THIS ISSUE
- Tonyboy and Gretchen still together /E1
- Sept. Vogue features Filipina's jewelry designs /F1

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Early Christmas shopping at the Madness

It's almost that time of year again. Time to start scanning for that perfect Christmas gift for the people you love. Maybe it's time to get that new refrigerator for Mom. Or upgrade to a sleek LCD TV for Dad. Maybe it's time to give your kid sister the new mobile phone she's been bugging you about. Or why not get the latest new PC as a gift for yourself? Many of us want to give our loved ones the best and the latest gadgets and appliances. What keeps us from doing so is, of course, our limited budgets.

BPI Express Credit understands this and responds by bringing the BPI INSTALLMENT MADNESS, putting together all the widest array of appliances, computers, mobile phones, and other gadgets all under one roof. BPI Express Credit cardholders can enjoy great deals like discounts, freebies, and most importantly, enjoy their purchases worth at least P5,000 to BPI Spree installment Plan (S.I.P.).

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The BPI INSTALLMENT MADNESS is ongoing at the Glorietta Activity Center, Ayala Center, Makati from September 24 to October 12, 2008. Participating dealers and brands include the following:

- APPLIANCES - Abenson, Anson-sales Home Appliances, Arzons, Automatic Center, BM Appliances, SOGO, Watsonart, Western Marketing, Acetech, Electrolux, Fisher & Paykel, GE, Hoefline, JVC, Kelly, La Tornesina, Panasonic, Philips, Pioneer, Samsung, Sony, Toshiba, Whirlpool.

- COMPUTERS & GADGETS - Accent Micro, ACE Axiom, Ambassador Home Electronics, Apple Center, AV Suite, Cameahaus, Compaq, Complink, Elec-tronworld, Hewlett-Packard, PC Express, Premiere Logic, Silicon Valley, The Computable Authority, Wilmart, Asus Cameo, Canon, Compaq, HEI Motorola, Nextbase, Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Toshiba.

- FURNITURE, Ambiance One, BLIMS, Home Options, Home Plus.

- JEWELRY & WATCHES - Chronos, Crystal Cave, Fossil, Hour Glass, Just Jewels, L Time Studio, Luxuria, Mikasa Jewels, Swatch, Timex, Time Central, Time Depot, Wilsmington Jewelry.

- OTHERS: G.A. Yuangco, Gift Gate, Manila Imperial Motor Sales, Sportsfreaks.

BPI Express Credit cardholders can also avail of Real 0% deals and enjoy up to 3x their regular credit limit at the participating dealers' store outlets nationwide up to October 31, 2008.

Why wait for the last minute to get the perfect gifts for your loved ones? Visit the BPI INSTALLMENT MADNESS today and start your Christmas shopping!

No BPI Express Credit card yet? Visit the BPI booth at Glorietta or any BPI or BPI Family Bank branch, or log on to www.bpiexpresscredit.com to apply.

'I'll always be the poor boy from Borongan who social-climbs'

ROY Alsonda at Red to Mahal: Shangri-La

ROY ABUNDA WALKED into the room in an oatmeal blazer by Jose Aseron. That was a very subdued color for one of the country's most flamboyant personalities. So, too, Boy Abunda.

But Abunda dresses on certain occasions. His life—not yet that old—is full of them. He rose from the ranks—an all-around Boy Pe-

PLAYTIME
By the Staff

day of one of the country's most powerful women, Cornelia Ongpin. She invited him, she says, Professor Higgins to Boy's Eliza Doolittle. (Forgive us, Audrey Hepburn and Auggie Cordero.)

Today, however, he's a humanitarian with a touch that's all his own. Not only does he emcee's women. His fame and fortune are the product of hard work, guts, talent and luck.

Reading us, you'll note the gang'gan's homespun wisdom and (rich) cultural references. One time he just launched a selling like hotcakes.

For that and other bigger things in life, he is a grateful boy. The guy knows how to look back.

What was your course in college before Tita Conching (Stevens, the society columnist) discovered you?

Business Management. I'm back in school now with Tita Helen (Benitez), at Philippine Women's University's Graduate School of International Relations and Public Diplomacy. People think I do it online, but I really go to school.

It's a special course leading to a two-year Masteral.

Why are you into diplomacy?

I never had the big international ambition. I'm more interested in cultures. I've always been interested. What got me into it was the Madeleine Albright book "The Mighty and the Almighty." It's basically the life of Madeleine Albright. The book's the first woman "Madame Secretary," right after the Iranian Crimson's brewery of fame. I was reading it and happened to be talking to Sean Bratter: "Sean, guess what I'm into?"

That was also the week I was interviewing Lilian Simeon, the former national treasurer—public administration at UP. Safe to Speak, at Ateneo de Manila, and to enroll when the time was right.

You zeroed in on diplomacy.

It's culture and public diplomacy, which is very interesting. Albright's book basically says there is no way to separate politics from diplomacy.

I'm not into politics per se because I do a lot of political interviews. Mas nacitin-inhibit ka na siguro kung dati'y gusapp ni Hot Contemplation, for example. Mas-inhibition ka na siguro kaka'ni despite de la Cruz or no-no.

Mahirap ang Jeannie-kapkap kay Imelda in diplomatic circles. Fidel Castro at his entourage. Fidel Castro is Fidel Castro. It was announced that the Philippine delegation would be in Cuba. Castro never met anyone in the airport, but in this day they love Imelda Marcos in Cuba. She was the only one to receive an invitation of Castro at vague pleasures, with Castro himself down-ang, so that says a lot. Then when you say you're from the Philippines, people would say Ms. Marcos is most beautiful. Imagine he was driving an open jeep and showing Mr. Marcos the whole place!

Mr. Marcos and I, to this day—she had a dinner here in this room a few months ago—we have a certain connection. Aside from being sweep—we speak in Waray—there's the Tita Conching connection.

Siguro inclusip sila kung sino si Tita Conching! (Laughs)

Tita Conching (Santos, the late columnist-czar of Metropolitan Theater) is the aunt of Imelda (1930s), the grandaunt of Irene (Marcos). Any resulting nation dynasties? Hmmm.

She was the first to give Irene (Marcos) her big break—in *Sitsit ni Bobbo Chito Madrigal*. I need to carry her bag when we used to shoot.

I was brought in the Hilton because we used to do the Inauguration shows at the Hilton in Frankfurt. Ang buon ko yata, noon was $500, pero siyam-pu sabaddid ako bay Tita Conching.

Tapadda ako ng bag. Argalen ng mirrors sa Hilton, may red carpet, may mahabang pagkapkap pinapakapkapan si Tita Conching. On the red carpet, she was being welcomed by the general manager. Sabi ko, "Tita, just who are you?" Wala talaga maintroduce.

That was the time the Philippines was ranked highest in the world.

She was the best friend of Daisy Dee Macapagal, the mother of our President. She was the only missing of the president at her wedding.

Medded talaga ako ay Tita Conching, pero I never learned manners. (Laughter) Alam ma-imatuon niya ito. "Ito yung kasama ni Imelda." Sabi ko, "Tita, I'm sorry, I'm late." I never learned, really. Diplomacy dinner—mediyagas yon, the first.

Hmm, kapag nababasa ko sa party si Tita Conching, nade-lot, you have arrived.

What were the parties like?

She would get the Royal Montreal Ballet Company from Canada to perform for Austrian-inspired party and invite real Austrian princes and princesses. She was very close to Mrs. MacArthur, the wife of the general (Douglas MacArthur). There were times she'd tell me, "Yup, call Mrs. MacArthur," thinks ko MacArthur Bridge. (Laughter)

My god, Tita is the Mrs. MacArthur. I used to make palusdan. On clippings of Tita—meron ajong pictures in Inquirer, Philippine Star, pero the gown without a crown. She used to wear a red tiara. She was the Carnival Queen of 1935.

In that party, Tita told me first to Rosy, was in the same room, Lulubabo. Tita Conching was much ahead of her time. She would wear a class in European parties. And someone said from took interest in the class, but, of course, we money lense.

Tita, whether you are proud of me or not, this is the package. (Laughter)

The intro ng kuh, the tono ng kuh, the people skills, the courage to go through everything and anything that's on certain and don't. And most im-portant, no laugh at everything and nothing. She taught it herself.

That's the fruit of that generation, they can laugh at themselves.

They were not full of themselves. And it was a generation that didn't define style and class. They lived it, and it was no limit ang to watch them.

Where did you get your fondness for clothes?

From Tita. When I was with Tita Conching, hindi naman ako qualified but she put me on the board of Metropolitan Theater. Hindi pa ako ang ano yours, pero si ang nasa ko. Basta, ang ano lang naman talaga ang nasa ko.

At Tita Conching multiply ng magandi, e dami kong hindi ako magandi. She was very honest and frank, she was formidable, she spoke her mind out.

She'd always laugh at herself. At a huge party at the Met lobby once, for instance, modelig si Tita Conching at bating ang ena-lenen: "When I die, I want you to tell people that your Tita was born a snob and would die a snob," and then cutsoot hanged (sus, abalaha baba. (Laughter)

But she loved her homeboy. Manang Gina would travel around the world with her. Bamboo chairs, bamboo chairs, or first class. She was loved. At sabi yung mga gay-kapitan-ka nun, yung mga ng evak ng mail ng taray yung napakalas ng gate.

It was rumored that Tita Conching's father was the basis of Rizal's Kapitan Tiago character. Tita Conching's family was in the manufacturing of bells. Tunog talaga, Chinese-Spanish.

What she died, how were you?

I was inconsolable. She didn't speak to me for two years after. I left the libet, di ba? She really left us kuno. You didn't leave Tita Conching. Nobody did that.

But I know she was happy deep in her heart. She was grateful for me. And then she didn't write talk again.

My biggest frustration was, I wasn't able to thank her enough.

She was like 17 or 18 years old when I was Limited Queen in 1981. And she was the matibo—kapag bored ang pangga-pangga-mo siya. Sabaddid.

She was the original Gossip Girl. (Laughter)

You are the outin.

I'm so famous, still. Anything that's bored I also wear in the height of summer. I'd do crowds kung ako nagtrip dahon, Pangmusta! (Laughter)

Kung ibaw-ipit, sino ba?

Sino ba ako? I'll be a bit selfish. I would show more boobs, more legs. But with the same wings and feathers and whatever. And maybe I'd be a little more outrageous sooner also-a. (Laughter). Magpi-Pilosbi ako.

Pero's money?

Money's fine. We're building a new house in place of our ancestral home, madama na.

Are you the youngest?

I'm the youngest, both of us are girls. (Laughter) My sister is very shy. Ang ano ko lang, I'm famous was a public-school teacher. She retired as vice-principal, she retired in public. Ang sister ko.

Are you going into politics?

No, I've been in show business ever since I was 8. And I don't want to go into politics because I want to do a lot of other things, like producing talk shows. Producing, not necessarily spending money. I hope to do that well.

The Oprah (Winfrey) approach.

Correct. Pero ikanga-hanga ko siya ito. Oprah—"Television is politicians interrupting." You have to do that. Ano if you're on TV and you have three minutes to wrap up, tapos gusto mo pang-wap technique dito or bingo. Hindi when you talk, blah blah blah blah...pssst.

Ako, I watch very intently. Kase yung phrasing ng mo-mentary audience, very happening. Pero I'm very, very sensitive. Dahuldihut mo, "I understand."

Especially if you do politicians, kasi even before you ask a question, meron na silang pro-gramo. "Hello, good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the show..." "Kase ano yung mga walong naipapon ko..." (Laughter)

Who do you like the most?

I will always say the most honest.

Ang nakapag-all-time favorite pero-nsyon ko—was with the late Ex-Minister Tan. Pag-upo niya sabaga sa akin, gantin: "Sino ka ba?" (Laughter)

Sabi ko, "Ang pangalan ko po, sinisi, ay Boy Abunda." (Laughter)

Hindi niya talaga ako-kilala!

Sabi niya, "E ano naman ang kakuwentuhin mo sa akin, madre lang ako, sa Leyte ako lang ako."

Ang tawag diyan ay first gang, ang first pasok ng interview was a sitwapah.

Sa totoo-rin, ang gusto ng re-search ko.

"Sister, magsimula po ang inyong pamilya sa Minahan, sa Bantayan, hanit pa kayo nagmula ba?"

"Sinisi ka."

Gusto ko? Whole gap of 15 minutes, "Dyan ka," sabi ko.

Sometimes in the middle of interview, you find out, you don't know what would happen.

Sabi ko, "Sister, what do you know about boxing?"

"Oh, a lot." (Laughter)

"Sister, tell me what you know about love."

Akala ko magki-love ayo ng Diyos! "Hindi me hindi ko nararanasan yan. I also-bil in love an ceremony ang life."

Ay, sabi ko sa sa. And that ended it.

Ever been intimidated by a subject?

Wala, nandoo ang tortyura ko many akoy bata pa. (Laughter) Hindako talaga. I pray for grace sometimes because when I am jittery I am a little cautious: when I'm relaxed, I'm still.

Lahat ng look-lang talaga ang pahunan ko—I had no body, I had no face, I used to convince myself I was beautiful. Kapag yung kapag ang pinagpapalagan mo ang pinapalagan ko, yung kapag ang pinagsasabihan mo ang pinapalagan ko ng bahay, ano pang maiwendo ni yo?

Hindako ito noon (at the Met) but me-feel-ko noon yung camera roll. I'd always be in the background, the Philippine National Anthem. I feel so bad-lo talaga noon! Ima-lang ang ano-cause, gayon (Laughter), kaalam pa talaga ako sa date.

I did an interview with Fey (Quindoza), an Ateneo Student. We grew up together in Metropolitan Theater with Tita Conching. Sabi niya, "Alam mo, Boy, if you saw yourself when we were young and you were struggling, you'd have been interested because you'd have killed anyone who came in your way!"—just to describe how much-strong I had.

Pero you haven't had a great tragedy-memory?

Generally, people have been really kind and generous. Because along the way I also-save-han anyone. I just did it my way talaga.

Even past lovers? (Laughter)

They're all my friends. (Laughter)

What do you feel about high society?

I feel so at ease with them. (Laughs) Because I forever had to climb the ladder to get to where I am. (Laughter)

But you're also-educated.

And I never tried to be one of them. High society. I don't want to blend with them, to this very moment I don't want to be them. I am what I am, and I will always be Jolgs. I'll always wear my tsinelasan whenever I want.

What books are you reading?

It's called "Audition"—it's lately. Barbara Walters finally wrote her book.

Where else you find the time to read?

Ay, everyday. No matter how crazy my day is, I read it with my reading and I'm solid in my reading.

Wishes?

Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Pinabel Conflict you can read me more in two minutes). I'm a Cinta buff, I read his book inabut-ng "Giving." I do never books at the same time, depending on my mood. "One Measure of a Man" is a lovely book.

I have this fascination with Sheila Sirois, ang gulfing-gulfing eye. That famous line, "I would have wanted it less you but I just wanted my bad"—gulfing style! "Mother Confession," that was her bend.

Who else you chose to in show biz?

Of course, Iris. She's the one who understands who I am and what I want. She gives me space. I'm close to Gretchen Barretto, Daniel Fabian.

I have Toni Gonzaga. At Ai Ai (de las Alas), Judy I love, Martin Nievera.

With high society, I also do dinners with them. (Laughter) I'm very comfortable with Lizzie Gokongwei, Tessie Sy-Coson (Farrar). I like them, I like the Zobel brothers and I hope they like me, too. (Laughter) The true dinners I've had with them I truly enjoyed. I love Ayi Ayenza. I love that group with Maricris Sioson.

While we pong Manila's still, the lines have been blurred by celebrityhood, which is now show biz and politics. Ateneo na yung exclusivity noon. Noon 400 lang talaga, now it's 4 million. (Laughter)

Does Tita Fascinated with the wealthy, the high society.

What fascinates you about them?

The skin. Most of them have nice skin, it's not them wealth. And most of them today are so OA. They are subdued and quietly elegant. A lot of them are in school, and very smart.

What made you do that pasfluine by Joel Cruz?

Because I thought nobody would do it.

What's it for?

It's-ano de saludo. I underscanned-in myself. It's-ay-ling like bobosales and I am surprised.

It's mahirap. I never discovered in my life that I'd have a perfume! Bryan Ito, Pangsosot! (Laughter)

Gusto ko yung halagay at gusto ko yung hipo ko. Kung ang pruyo ng pabango-ay P1.99, baka parang pumasa ng isang ko. yun nong Japanese-ang niya. I wanted to make sure it was usable. Hindi ako perfume expert, pero months and months and months... I brought the vidette to all my friends: "Amoy-in mo nga ko." (Laughs)

So what point are you in your life now?

As my mom organizes: (Laughs) I am about a week in progress—though that's a long line. But at this point I can afford to joke. I can assume in my relationships. I'm comfortable in saying these the guy in me who's not nervous anymore.

'Lakas ng loob lang talaga ang pahunan ko—I had no body, I had no face'

The beloved *Meldy* back to her beloved charity work

BELOW Cojuangco with Beloved Doors committee Glenda Peñaloza and Mariona Ramos, and Dr. Francisco Duque, Heart Foundation of the Philippines president

By Margo C. Enriquez
Correspondent

AFTER A THREE-YEAR HIATUS from the social scene, philanthropist and fashion icon Imelda Cojuangco is back, and literally stronger than ever. The society grand dame is recuperating from an aneurysm in the heart.

"I have excellent doctors," she said, beaming, during the press conference for the Beloved Doctor dinner show at the 3rd restoration of Makati Shangri-La. "I followed their instructions very faithfully. I did not go out for three months. In the other months, I pooled myself. Some people might get offended. But what can I do? I have to take it easy because I needed to."

Aside from her annual Catholic club humanitarian Cocoinspire Fundraising event (which will be held on Sept. 30), she is at the helm of the Beloved Doctor dinner-show on Oct. 17 at the Makati Shangri-La ballroom.

The beneficiaries are indigent patients with breast or liver ailments. As the chairperson, her job goes beyond selling tickets and getting donors. She's like the good luck charm and an invaluable force in any charity undertaking. The project is close to her heart, literally and figuratively, because she was born with a congenital rheumatic heart and has recently survived a heart ailment.

> On donor fatigue, "Sometimes I feel like crying, but they know it's not for myself"

Angel

Asked how many charities she's involved in, Cojuangco humbly replied, "I don't tell people."

Marichu Maceda, the prime mover of Beloved's project management committee and her longtime executive assistant of sorts, interrupted.

"She gives to everybody who comes in. I said, 'Now you have to prioritize the most important things.' She also gives money to the church."

Cojuangco's latest project involves the restoration of the Sta. Ana Church.

"She's the angel of everybody," said Ms. Francesca Sloane of the Philippine Heart Center, the main beneficiary of the cause. "She's the angel of beauty," added Belleza's Jolie Teng-Chan.

"I like that," Cojuangco agreed.

At the press conference, the society dowager was dressed in a pleated floral chiffon dress. Her hair was pulled back in her signature bun to reveal her neck, emphasized by her drop pearl earrings. She had moisturized her cuticle skin with coconut oil.

"I keep myself refined. I don't handle myself. I eat fruits, vegetables and seafood. Ever since I heard about the benefits of coconut oil, I've been putting it on my face. I leave it overnight. But it's not for married couples. The husband will find it too messy."

We watched her generously spray her broccoli and asparagus with salt at the press conference venue) na.

Cojuangco is also noticed by Philippine Long Distance and Telephone company chief Manuel Pangilinan and Jollibee Elizalde. The experience has also tapped PAL Chairperson Mila Arroyo.

Medical aid

Eight years ago, Marian received the Golden Heart award from the Home Beach Foundation of New York and was named the Life of Life coordinator to the Philippines. This Foundation has given medical aid to indigent children with heart and liver ailments. In the past years, some 10,000 indigent patients have been helped.

"The Beloved Committee is organizing a concert featuring the New York Opera singers, Martin Nievera and composer Louis Ocampo. Tickets are at P10,000 to P20,000 per head or P200,000.

Two years ago, the first "Beloved" show, with designer Inno Sotto presenting a fashion show with opera music, was a sell-out.

At those prices, and in the context of a shaky economy will the Beloved Committee meet its quota?

Shows said they are banking on the credibility of the organizers and people's generosity of spirit.

"If people know they are helping, those (those who can afford) will come forward and help support. We will have some good-hearted people. Once they see the project is meritorious, they will come."

Have they heard of donor fatigue?

Cojuangco admitted that she has had her share of rejections.

"Sometimes I feel like crying, but they know it's not for myself. I know it's a beautiful project. They know the money goes straight to the beneficiary. We don't subtract anything."

Marichu added, "Some people are more generous because they can see it is for a good cause."

Hopefully the kindness will have a rippling effect.

For details, contact Cheryl Salvador at 0908-3268488; Angel Union, 0917-7969909 or 817-3928; e-mail belovedinc.corp@gmail.com.

Wyeth

My child is 4 years old and he still stutters!

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A debutante raises funds for the homeless

CHI CHI, Alex, Michaela and Mandy Edaqua

By Kristine Gonzales
Contributor

ALEXIS DEBUT IS undeniably one of the most important moments of her life. For Alex Madrigal Edaqua, her 18th birthday went well beyond a celebration of life. It also signified the realization of a lifelong dream for the homeless families who will benefit from the intimate black and white affair that Alex threw for close family and friends last Sept. 6 at the home of her beloved late grand-aunt, Doña Consuelo Madrigal.

For the third year in a row, Alex has chosen to share her special day with a cause that is dearest to her heart—building homes with Christian Housing Ministry Habitat for Humanity Philippines. In 2006, she asked her parents to donate a number of houses for families who live in Bacoor, Tondo, Manila.

THE DEBUTANTE with Fernando Zobel de Ayala

The succeeding year, the drive to introduce the importance of giving back by throwing a Habitat Birthday Building Bash, where dignitaries, relatives and schoolmates joined her for a day of sawing, painting and building with home partners in Habitat's Tagaytay site.

For her grand debut, Alex chose to throw a fundraising ball and invited family and friends to donate funds for houses in lieu of gifts.

Her desire to help the needy fueled her drive to aim high in her endeavors to provide shelter for the homeless. Alex says, "The longest lasting and the best birthday gift for me is the fulfillment of knowing that on my 18th birthday [and long after young ma'am, tatanda na rin yung iba kasi they [get to have] houses and that gift will be there forever and they'll be able to pass that on to their children."

The funds raised that night reached over her P2 million target. As a result of the debutante's and her guests' generosity, her birthday wish to build an Alex Habitat Village became a reality.

Habitat International recently gave Alex the Habitat for Humanity Selfridge Award for 2008 and a $10,000 donation, which she will use for the Alex Village.

The Selfridge Award for Distinguished Volunteer Services is awarded to individuals who have shown exceptional service to the mission of Habitat for Humanity and have motivated and inspired others to reach new heights of achievement.

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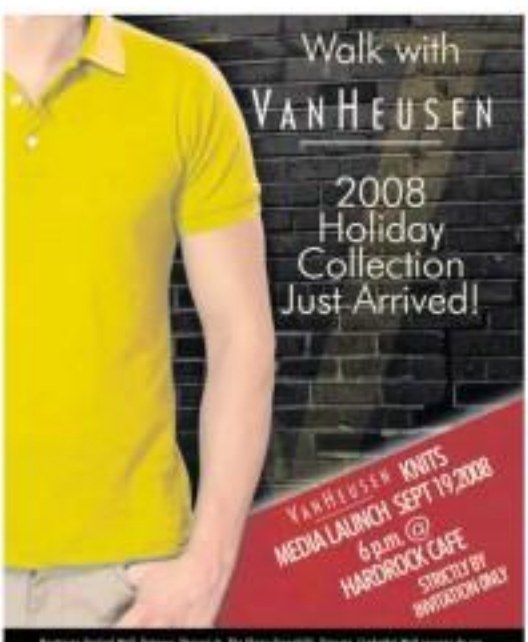

Sunday LIFESTYLE

SUPER couple Chito and Anna Sotto-pano

GENEROUS Imelda Zandro Ty and Five Daughter Lei Arroyo

"CELEBRITY Duets" judges Ebeth Tan, Bea Princess and Freddie Santos with Tim Yap

"CELEBRITY Duets" hosts Ogie Alcasid and Regine Velasquez

Channeling my inner Paula Abdul

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

MY NEIGHBORS HAVE A HOME of dolls vs, as I am back in Glen Studio for "Celebrity Duets." I am jubilee with all the contestants as they pour their hearts into their performances in an effort to win P1 million. At the same time, I hope they will donate it to charity as I did last year.

It's much easier for me this time around, channeling my inner Paula Abdul plus fluff and frills, to one of the judges. Besides me are two very celebrity personalities—Ebeth Tan and Freddie Santos. I have the confidence in the singing to cheer and focus on the costumes and performances.

The judges' votes don't always tally with mine. One of my favorites, Melanie Marquez, has already been booted out, and I was sad to see veteran stars Gary Quintos exit. The remaining Duets are getting the drop of the contest so they are all improving every week.

Designer JC Buendia has been dressing me up lately with creations from his Studio Work Show.

Ball winner

Another gracious designer is Oliver Tolentino who proudly represented his country at Bali Fashion Week.

Invitees of the Indonesian government, Oliver and young designer Mark Dalisa joined the Asian competition for a weeklong show in Bali.

Oliver's grand prize-winning entry is a fully detailed, green gown with capis encrusted wings, torch and headpiece. Keeping to the theme of nature, the creative soul is a mermaid parade before it hit the runway with the rest of the beautiful collections.

Just before heading to Bali, Oliver asked if I could wear the outfit for an upcoming book he is planning. Insurance photographer Ronnie Salvacion handled my portrait and that of Gen Virgen-Ilen Lani Mercado-Revilla, who wore a stunning yellow gown.

Glowing here home in the minds of many lately, what with the much-awaited Tatler Ball last around the corner. Last year, my fellow Lauref silk lord adorned gown blended in to the garden background of the Shang Ball-room. Every year, fun challenges the ladies of Manila to come up with showstoppers.

Several of these stylish ladies, such as Bea Valdes, Tina Dominguez and Margarita Forés, are featured in the recently released seventh anniversary issue of the Philippine Tatler, in thicker ever. Tatler has become the lifestyle bible of Manila, packed with great articles and lots photos in well laid-out pages.

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FASHION designer Oliver Tolentino and Lani Mercado

HANDSOME Mayor Marides Fernando, Bea Princess, DPWH SVP of construction Wilfredo Gutierrez and QTV host Ricky Reyes

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Photo-pet Corner

Click-ID! Strike a pose with your beloved pets and take home fun memories from the Royal VIPet Day at SM MOA.

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DESIGNER Oliver Tolentino walks down the ramp.

METROBANK'S Alfred Ty, Irene Marcel Francisco and Eric Cosa

METROBANK Foundation president Chito Salonga-no, Rosa Rosal and Eric's Chua

"HOUSE LIFE" taping of pilot episode

Channeling . . .

From page B1

Red ladies

For the ball, my second accessory will be the Sony Ericsson C902 Cyber-shot Phone. As I am technologically challenged, my 10-year-old **Sandra** booked it up with my Globe Platinum SIM card. It's loaded for 30 numerous features, like its touch screen, 5-megapixel camera.

The C902 is so chic that it fits perfectly in my Ben Nikko bag, so I won't have to lug around a camera at the ball. I got this idea from watching the camera phone in action at Rajo Red, Rajo's 11th anniversary gala benefit.

House of Laurel GM Marilen Laurel-Hernandez and **Samantha Laurel** were among the first to use the new C902. As the main sponsor of the event, Sony Ericsson assisted Rajo in choosing all the glamorous Rajo Red ladies, including visiting Hong Kong Girl Set **Audrey Chok**, **Kely Atkeson** and **Monica Mendigoza**, who all hooked us branding with their new phones.

The Rajo Red Ladies were part of the Corinthian Club of the Philippines' Unique Tea Red exhibit, for the benefit of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) Makati Branch.

Red Divas member-mommies **Marichelle Padilla**, **Bianca Gonzalez** and **Hosanna Go** were among the special ladies chosen to receive a C902 Cyber-shot phone as a token for their generous donations.

You still have another chance to buy that set. It is "simply amazing" with donors like the PLDT Smart Foundation and the Metrobank Foundation giving so much to assist the Red Cross.

Metrobank gives to Red Cross

The Metrobank Foundation is the corporate social responsibility arm of the Metrobank Group of Companies. Over the past 20 years, it has promoted a culture of excellence among Filipinos through its various programs notably the launch in Outstanding Teachers, the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence, Outstanding Philippine Athletes Reinforcement in Service and College Scholarship Program.

The Foundation also has grants programs assisting empowerment and government responsibilities.

The generous Metrobank Foundation gave to both the Makati Red Cross and PNRC headquarters, the latter courtesy by Red Cross grand dame **Rosa Rosal**. With all the fundraising I am impressed with how the Makati branch, refined called you're sure Rosa Rosal. And I replied, yes, but with a dash of the golden Julie dresses in!

My own TV show

After years of recognizing young, talented painters, the Metrobank Foundation has reinvented its content into the Metrobank Art & Design Excellence. The awards now include promising sculptors, architects and interior designers, especially those with green and natural philosophies in their designs.

The creative design winners will be featured in my own TV show, "House Life," which gives on QTV tomorrow at 7:35 p.m. after "Sweet Life." Pals hear inside!

The premier episode features the house that's totally built. Concrete doctor is the stars Vicki Belo and her daughter Cassandra Ligtas. Then there's the house of Ryan Agoncillo and Judy Ann Santos, which is made entirely of bamboo.

Other episodes will feature the homes of Ogie Alcasid and Regine Velasquez, Ruffa Gutierrez and Yilmaz Bektas, Sharon Cuneta and Kiko Pangilinan, Kris Aquino and Mel Sarmiento, Bianca Gonzalez and Zanjoe Marudo, Iza Calzado and Dennis Trillo, Jolina Magdangal and Mark Escueta, Angel Locsin and Jason Abalos, Dingdong Dantes and Marian Rivera, Jennylyn Mercado and Patrick Garcia, Jodi Sta. Maria and Albert Martinez, Maja Salvador and Rambo Nunez, Ara Mina and Dave Almarinez, Carmina Villarroel and Hero Angeles, Sam Milby and Bea Alonzo, Dawn Zulueta and Rhian Ramos, Jessy Mendiola and Luis Manzano, Heart Evangelista and Chiz Escudero, Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson, Angelica Panganiban and Richard Gutierrez, Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo, Sarah Geronimo and Matteo Guidicelli, Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby, Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes, Angel Locsin and Luis Manzano

Sunday LIFESTYLE Relationships

Suddenly, Mona

By Chit Roces
Coordinator

MY NEWEST GRANDCHILD ARRIVED BY E-MAIL, with vague and scarce entries, and from the most unlikely candidate for parenthood among my four children—my youngest and unmarried son, a lieutenant in the US Army stationed in Hawaii.

"Mother," he began his ever-so-calm call, using his stock term of endearment for me, a non-sensation from maiden deviance, a favorite expression of mine. "Open your e-mail," he continued, impatiently.

Mounting suspicion from him, lamenting that displacement in Iraq was always a possibility, I turned into a bundle of nerves and asked my husband, at the moment occupied with editing on his computer, to quit and switch to e-mail. My nervous mate must have been nervous all over my face, for one look at the inquired him to oblige promptly.

The computer screen unrolled a picture with suspense, a peek at a time, from the top down. Finally, a baby was revealed, as pink as her blanket, hair and three months—though mercifully not the same... five children I have myself to be his favorite world.

I felt like being a grandmother for the first time—the once same feeling I had felt upon the arrival of each previous grandchild, the stomp on it sounds, it was almost like being in love.

It had been nearly 10 years. With two now remaining unmarried going into middle, I thought less grandchildren were all I would ever have—until, suddenly, Mona!

When, how

With the wonder of the moment, I could see only see her, but also hear her, seeing. It was the next best thing to touching her.

But, as my heart swelled with joy, my mind popped questions. I know who, but when... how?

My soldier was here in September, the month he retired 40.0 in a medical mission that coincided with his grandmother's... my mother's, sudden death. He flew back after the funeral, before the month was over, with only a word about Ramona Louise, who would be born Oct. 10. Perhaps he felt there was too much grief in the air, for something of a complete surprise like Ramona to be proper fitting. At first, an unit also passed away just hours after my mom.

From what I can piece together in my imagination, Ramona was born out of the passion of a blindfold and flame, with passion, but with not much of a plan. Alas, personal circumstances and other realities do not allow this would-be family to come together just yet.

In the meantime, Ramona stays with my daughter, the legal guardian assigned by my son, who himself has gained temporary custody of her. Things can't wait for Mona, and Mona can't herself wait until her father finds a safer and more regular life in the army and her mother settles her own affairs. They may yet live happily ever after, but for now the reality is that neither of the parents is in a position to give Mona proper care; they can only love her from a distance.

True, a child's ideal place, especially in tender years, is with her parents. But I'm sure God has a plan, and His plan is for Mona to be happy, for how can it be otherwise? Anyway, whatever odds may be stacked against her shall be overcome by the miraculous power of love, which she shall have plenty of from mine and his.

I am pulling my money on Mona.

Surrogate mom

Already three times a mother, my daughter underwent a partial hysterectomy. As I kept her company at the hospital we got to talk about the surprises of motherhood, and I realized that she might have had fewer of them than most of us mothers. A teacher since before she became an actual mother, she definitely has had practice in surrogate guardianship. Come to think of it, even before the same of motherly age, I had had the habit of referring to her three younger brothers in our conversations as "the children".

If legal, actual, full-time surrogate motherhood has been the great surprise of her life, she is embracing the role fully, passionately and unconditionally, committing to take it on for life if necessary. That should alarm her in the rank of angel.

Ramona arrived, and soon her room looked like ours for a new mother. "I close feel that way, except this time I'm going home without a baby, Ma," she said, pouting playfully.

Almost as soon as she said it, we both laughed, realizing that waiting for her at home was Mona.

Why family and friends are a crucial part of cancer treatment

From page B4

aware of cancer in life-threatening illness than their parents or other adults had realized.

One of the worst things you can do is to lie to your children about your illness. It is always best to be honest with them and to tell them the truth—in an age-appropriate manner, of course. How you'd define your illness to a seven-year-old is not the same way you'd describe it to a 12-year-old.

United front

It is also important to present a united front before your children. Dr. Paula Rauch, a child psychiatrist on the Harvard Medical School faculty and co-author of the book "Making in Emotionally Healthy Child When a Parent Is Sick," said it is not uncommon for parents to disagree about how much or how little to tell a child.

Rauch encouraged parents to consider talking about breast cancer as part of the family rules of having honesty.

She said, "I've learned from some families that when parents withhold difficult truths from their children, when their children are teenagers they feel they've been given permission not to share difficult truths with their parents... It's a complicated message to a family to say, 'I like it can be hard to hear, we cannot share the piece of information.'"

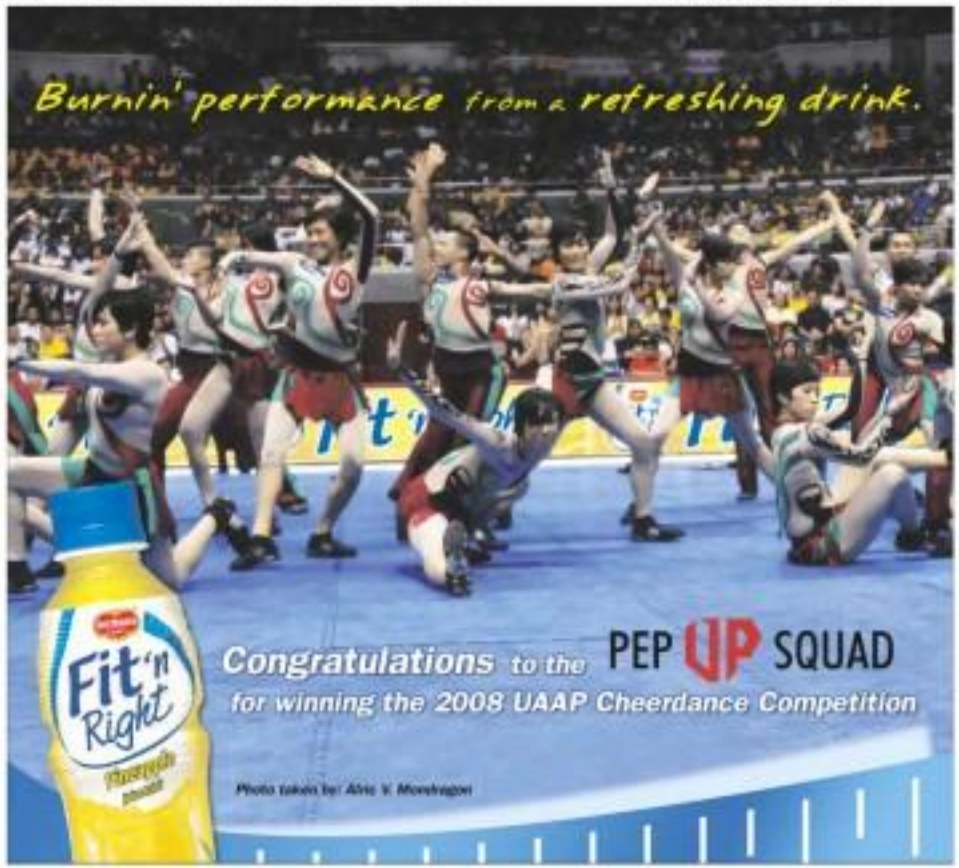
If frustrated and with disagree about this, they can seek professional support. "Parents and their children will certainly benefit and deserve the ex. to help they can get from a trained and caring professional."

And what about telling others about one's illness? I've discovered that one draws great power, comfort and strength from the help and prayers of people I trust.

The power of prayer, the support of friends, both old and new, and the kindness of strangers have proven to be a boon to lift one's spirit as one tries to heal.

(PAY IT FORWARD. Do your class for breast cancer awareness and participate in Avon's Walk for Breast Cancer, a 3-km noncompetitive walk on Oct. 5. Starting point is SM Mall of Asia. Registration starts 6 a.m. To preregister, visit www.avon.com.ph. On-site registration is also available.)

E-mail the author at carlybabes@gmail.com



Why family and friends are a crucial part of cancer treatment

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cielo Medina-Gutierrez

BY OCTOBER, MY daughter now in breast cancer survivor—loves and admirable women who show us how to live more fully and bravely.

They remind us about the brevity of life and how we should not leave room for regret or bother ill feelings against anyone. "Let go and let God" is a mantra I have learned from breast cancer survivors.

I just listened to Dr. David Spiegel, associate chair for Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine. Spiegel was here to lecture on the effects of stress.

Known for his work on support groups for cancer patients, he's done studies showing that support groups can lead to better coping, improved moods, and reduced pain, depression and anxiety for cancer patients.

When Spiegel started his research in the 70s, virtually no cancer patients were in support groups. Now, group therapy is a much more accepted part of cancer care.

In 1990, he did studies on 125 metastatic breast cancer patients. Though he noted improvement in the positive mood level of distress, anxiety and pain, there was no difference in overall survival between those women who attended therapy and those who didn't. Women in group therapy had a median survival of 37 months, while the group that received education materials alone survived a median of 19 months.

Spiegel attributed the change to the fact that both the emotional landscape and medical treatments available for breast cancer patients have improved since he initially began looking at more likely for patients to live longer and better.

Spiegel stressed, however, that support groups remain an important part of treatment.

"I've never told my patients to join a support group because it makes you live longer. I've said to do it because it helps you live better," he said.

Join a support group not because it makes you live longer, but because it helps you live better

Source of support

The Philippines now has many breast cancer support groups, the largest and most organized of which is 3Treasures (http://www.3treasures.net/). The group recently held a big 3Days Lodagit conference in Cebu City attended by over a thousand breast cancer survivors from the Visayas and Mindanao.

Big hospitals now host breast cancer support groups.

One's immediate family continues to be the greatest source of support. A loving and supportive spouse and children are poor to be the best "weapons" in the battle against breast cancer.

It always begins with communication, a willingness to share with and be open to one's immediate family and friends. Breast cancer can hit at the emotional core of family systems and its repercussions on the family are manifold and lasting.

Researchers in Oxford, England, interviewed 37 mothers with second diagnosis of breast cancer. This spouse of their children were between ages six and 16. They found out that even children were much more

AVON'S Walk for Breast Cancer

Should I quit my job and rejoin my family?

DEAR EMILY,

I am 44 years old and an overseas worker based in Riyadh. I've been working here for the last 14 years. Although my salary is not that big, I've been able to provide a good life to my family my in-laws and many other relatives. I believe I have been a good provider to many of the time even if it has meant that I do not have substantial savings and assets.

My problem is that I accept others my wife and only daughter who is 12 years old decided to return home for good to the Philippines this year. Even though I know it would be difficult for me to survive in Saudi Arabia after being with them here for the last 10 years, I accepted my wife's decision.

She wanted to be beside her ailing father who suffered a stroke several years ago. My wife is a nurse by profession, and wants to take her US State Board review classes in Manila.

Since my family left, it has been a very difficult and emotional transition for me. I never realized that coming home to an empty house was so painful! Even no money to tell you that every night I cry and wish them well. I miss my wife and daughter so much.

I don't know for how long I can endure our separation but a month ago I suffered from severe depression. I am currently undergoing counseling. I can hardly sleep at night and I've lost the appetite to eat. I'm afraid I am beginning to lose my mind thinking about my family.

I want so much to resign from my job and simply return home and live with them. In fact, I have already drafted my resignation letter. But I hesitate whenever I think of my financial responsibilities to those who rely on me for the financial support. Am I being selfish if I resign? Do you think it will be unfair if I left my job and went home?

Another reason that has been keeping me from resigning is that I thought a car or an installment loan in 2006. I still have over a year of payments left and if I quit my job now, that means I will be unable to pay the monthly amortization and lose whatever the money that has already been paid. Apart from that, it may cause embarrassment to my family.

Sometimes, however, I don't care anymore. I just want to go home and be with my family. To me, that is the only important thing.

MT

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcelo

If you either died now or lost your mind completely, you'll still have the down payment you paid for your car anyway, because you'll still be owning it. It's a loss or an a wheelchair.

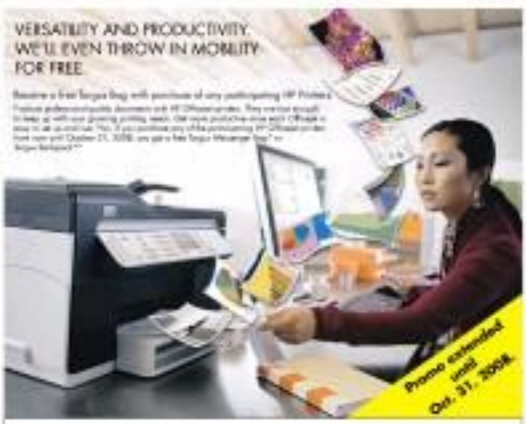
What is embarrassing you? Embarrassed because you will allow your car payments go down the toilet? What kind of ungrateful, insensitive creature are your relatives, anyway? Are you really as good at the money you regularly send back home?

Go to the broker if there's an office or way to get rid of your car. You can compensate for the loss when you start earning again somewhere where you're with your family already.

The important thing is for you to be with your wife and daughter now and save your mind before you flip out completely. Many don't understand how difficult it is to control the brain once it goes haywire. It's no joke to be in a foreign country alone, grieving and crying for your loved ones.

Go home now while you are still in possession of your faculties, while you can still think, and laugh and cry and talk sensibly. You're not in shackles, you're not in jail, you're not financially broke. Your troubles here only money holding you back! Go, go, go!

Email the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letter to Inquirer, Ayala ave. in www.phi.gov.ph and listen to Mr. Marcelo co-host the program "Balitaan Tayo," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dzBB 1161 kHz.



Sunday LIFESTYLE

Tonyboy with Gretchen still, and vice versa

NO, IT'S NOT THE end.

We're referring not to the fate of the world—but to the Tonyboy Gojangco-Gretchen Barretto long running affair which, talk has it, is now off again. Watching the ups and downs of the more than a decade relationship between the tycoon and the actress, who's one of the most beautiful Filipinas, is like weather-watching: you don't know when the tropical depression is building up, or when it'll be sunny or just overcast skies.

Insiders say it's not true that the tycoon has thrown the actress out of the house. In fact, they're very much together in their Makati home. "Gretchen will never leave him or [for] life," said the insider. "You will Tonyboy."

But...we also heard that Tonyboy is again scarce in his family's gatherings.

Tsk, you know when things are getting to be a bore again in Metro Manila: people turn to the latest about this couple. Or—is it when Gretchen is bored with her away-from-the-limelight days?

Celestina makes it to 'Gossip Girl'

CELESTINA, the luxury bag label designed by Tina Gianopo, lands on an episode of the hit teen drama, "Gossip Girl."

Amanda, the arts girl on campus played by Laura Leigh, is shown in one scene clutching a Celestina-crafted mirror glass rectangular white-lining cocktail with Dan (Penn Badgley).

The smart allusion on TVGirl Celestina, in a recent episode of "Upstok Jungle," Wendy Brooks Shields had a Celestina-like clutch. Its Manila, Money the hair-ess designer played by Lindsay Price, carried a handwoven from clutch, also by Celestina.

Anna in Time

As ASIA becomes a formidable market of luxury fashion, Asians are also making their claim on the magnificent catwalk.

"Asian models have appeared before, but the numbers have touched critical mass," Time magazine notes in its Style & Design supplement for Fall 2008.

A 20-year-old South Korean named Hyoni won the Ford Supermodel of the World, the first Asian to bag the title in the title's 27-year history. There's also the Chinese Du Juan, 23, who has done campaigns for Louis Vuitton and

SPOTTED: "Gossip Girl" guest star Lauren Leigh Lobosco (left) flaunting a Colombian sketch

Tonyboy with Gretchen . . .

From page 61

YSL. There are the runway statements—Alek Deik of South Korea, Ujjwala Raut of India, Anne Watanabe of Japan and Jenny Zhou of China.

But among the first Asians to make a name in international modeling, Time reports, is the Philippines' Anna Keyle, who died in June in the '90s, modeling for top European houses. She was among the highest paid faces of the era, photographed by the likes of Helmut Newton, Peter Lindbergh, Patrick Demarchelier, and featured in campaigns of major brands.

An original supermodel, Keyle paved the way in the '90s for stylized-cum-beautiful—Gemma Ahrens, Anne Ivon Palmera, Lee Gingasan and Ida Kristensen Davies do.

Until recently, there had been a dearth of ethnic models on runways. "But the industry is slowly arou" the article says. "Designer is just well-heeled Europeans and Americans who are scooping up $800 handbags and $2,400 jackets."

'Green' resto

THE GREEN restaurant movement is picking up steam. The trend for healthy, fresh and organic dishes has influenced restaurant owners to go green.

Antonio Aliaga and Annie Pilipinas salu-Inspaclim opened Blind Dairy Farm, a green, gourmet restaurant that offers fresh, milk-based products—fresh mozzarella, ricotta, pizza and flavored yogurts and butter spreads—and other delicious specialties, such as salad (beverage and cuisine and signature gourmet dishes. (The local company supplies hotels and restaurants.)

The Aliajos are lovely men's milk from Tessy and Lagtas, Juicy tallness (goat) cheese from Switzerland, and certified organic vegetables from Tanauan, Batangas, and Tagaytay in Cavite.

Aliaga, a native mayor in Tessy, says that, given the demand for fresh, healthy and reasonably priced food, there are suppliers who resort to deceptive practices. They bombard fruits, vegetables, poultry and dairy products with pesticides, hormones, and are third-tier to help producing chefs like her endanger human health.

That prompted the couple to initiate the organic movement in the Philippines, with Blind Dairy Farm as founding member of the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines and Organic Producers Trade Association in the Philippines.

Ask PLDT

WANT your remote fill of check-ink gossip? Or a recipe to please your lover? Or do you just want to check the weather?

Beyond the every assistance, your landline phone can now be a good source of home, business, lifestyle and entertainment information, as telecom giant PLDT unveils its phone concierge service.

AskPLDT 1811-611 is a voice-aided service that gives PLDT residential postpaid landline subscribers easy-to-understand access to useful and timely information from their home phone.

AskPLDT 1811-611 is a first in the country—a round-the-clock service that comes with 30 free calls monthly and requires no applications, registration or monthly service fees.

All that glitters . . .

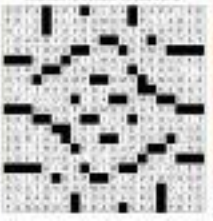
THE WORLD economy is in a shambles, our democracy is... well. But you'll never guess that last year's bash in a private party recently which cancelled a jewelry collection. The place wasn't really overflowing. There were only a handful of visitors. Yet—the sales rep up to him of midterm, to no sight.

Table manners

SOMETIMES sit-down dinners of Manila's chi-chi crowds could be a tricky affair, especially when they run out of seats. A gorgeous party, after waiting the ballroom, finally found its seat, but then he had two other guests in tow. Eager to woo his friends beside him, he grabbed the chairs and other personal stuff on the chairs next to his—she's ready placed there by the original occupants to reserve the seats—and dumped them on the next table, as other guests at this table stared in disbelief.

In postmodern society, table manners mean include not only the use of the right spoons, forks and knives, but also the observance of proper seating arrangements. The ballroom, after all, is not the MRT.

ANNE Boyle



ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

The Singapore Grand Prix Season Hits Manila

Singapore Tourism Board Regional Director for ASEAN Yim Cheong Chwat with STB Philippines Marianne Bartighak, Jaytee Hidalgoyo, Lyanlle Sison and Lisa Gonzales with models

A virtual hotel guarded over-over at the Glorietta's High Street as the Singapore Tourism Board Philippines (STB-P) showcased the attractive-packed attractions of the Singapore Grand Prix (SGP) Season during the last weekend of August. The two-day showcase gave racing fans and shoppers a glimpse of the F1-related festivities that the cool city has cooked up for the first-ever night street race in F1 history.

Among the SGP attractions featured were art events such as the Singapore Biennale 2006 gathering contemporary visual art pieces from local and international artists with varieties and media, and the Master's Formula. The Artistic Draw featuring the works of modern-day master sculptors and painters including Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

Fashion-addicts will enjoy the Bulgari Watch Exhibition 2008, featuring the luxury brand's impressive novelties for 2008, the Elegance collection in celebration of Bulgari's 125th anniversary, and exclusive limited-edition timepieces never seen before in Southeast Asia, the STYLO Fashion Grand Prix, a gala showcasing international luxury labels and Singapore couture. Meanwhile, the TAG Heuer Racing Legends of our Time Exhibition will give motor-fan the chance to buy one of the limited-edition MSP-inspired watches.

The Singapore Rose Festival highlights the charm of the Singapore Rose as it hosts the ideal spot for nightly festivities such as art exhibitions, flea/antique sale, food and beverage promotions, and exhilarating outdoor parties. Another food highlight is Michelin-starred Chef Laurent Peugeot who will be serving up his take on culinary fusion at the renowned Mare Hotel.

Also interesting are the Singapore Motorshow 2008, which provides the best venue to test car aficionados to marvel at the world's latest and greatest race cars. Another exciting arena for racefans are the Ola Air Asia Grand Prix Challenge that will give aficionados the chance to pit their skills against pro racers driver Niko Rosberg via XFNT Mahalo-styled Chef Laurent Peugeot who will be serving up his take on culinary fusion at the renowned Mare Hotel.

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And the party rides. Amber Lounge, one of the world's most exclusive party organizers, will throw a party like no other, where one can get up close and personal with Formula One(TM) ISN's and celebrities from the worlds of entertainment, fashion, music, and sports to what could be Singapore's most amazing nightlife experience. Right on the heels of the party comes the Singapore Rose Festival that will boast of hundreds of the best brews from around the world as well as local and international musical and comedy acts. The dance set will witness the Ola Air Asia Grand Prix Challenge, a series of premium lifestyle events where celebrities, moguls and sport royalty indulge in a yacht party, golf tournament, polo and club nights; and the STB Singapore Grand Prix Ambassador Cruise where top of the line private aircraft for attendees will be on display.

In addition to all of these, the exhibitions also highlighted by an exhilarating display of top-tier performance models from Ferrari and Jaguar. Lucky exhibit viewers also won exciting raffle prizes and snapped even more rewards from a mini-racetrack game at P1.00 a shot.

As the SGP fever hits Manila, STB-P and Singapore Flight Travel will also be giving away luxurious prizes exclusively for shoppers and dealers. Customers are entitled to a raffle entry for every P2,000 cash or credit card spent at any partner establishment from August 30 to September 30, prize. At stake for the grand prizes is a trip for two to Singapore with hotel accommodation and special prizes from Rivet Club, Jaguar and STB-P.

The SGP Season exhibit was organized by the STB-P in conjunction with Bonifacio High Street Partner, Jaguar and Rivet Club, store.

CHEF Ryan Jawadia

Olympic gold for Philippine tuna

DID YOU KNOW THAT PHILIPPINE TUNA was a big hit during the Beijing Olympics? Athletes loved our tuna so much they consumed more than 140 kilos of Century Tuna every day, cooked in many different ways.

It's not surprising that Century Tuna, a Filipino brand, was the brand of choice. The chef who thought of preparing the tuna recipes for some 25,000 Olympic participants is the celebrated Pinoy chef Ryan Jawadia.

The University of the Philippines graduate was selected from about 250 shortlisted top chefs from around the world, and was among the newsmaker thebrokenbed by the International Olympic Committee.

The job involved the gargantuan task of preparing meals for one of the world's biggest gatherings and the biggest Olympic event ever—with 10,000 athletes, 5,000 journalists and some 8,000 delegates from over 204 countries.

Being a Filipino, he made it a point to give each of his culinary creations a Pinoy flavor. He created the Philippine mango crème brûlée, Pinoy garlic rice, adobo and sopresatas pancit.

Jawadia thought of including tuna as a main ingredient in his recipes because its high protein and healthy content made it ideal for athletes.

Since each ingredient that went into the meals of Olympic athletes had to be screened by a special committee, Century Tuna had to pass the rigid Olympic quality inspections, and a special screening procedure to make sure it was free from stimulants that might affect the athlete's performance.

After passing the tests, Jawadia's tuna concoctions became an instant hit, so much so that he ran out of Century Tuna stocks. A special order had to be straightaway from General Santos, Philippines, shown to Beijing.

Jawadia said Century Tuna for sandwiches, salads and main courses. He had to come up with a special tuna recipe especially for gymnasts who had to closely monitor their weights and food intakes.

All in all, he created five recipes using tuna, which is popular among athletes for its low-fat, high protein content, in addition to its omega 3 docosahexaenoic acid...essential fatty acids that boost mental focus, memory function and even promotes emotional balance.

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Show off how you wear your sandals by sending pictures that bring out the personality of your footwear! Whether its city living, sporty fun or casual walking, the most appealing photos can win you a trip to Rio!

PLANET SPORTS

freeway

Singapore Grand Prix Season makes F1 history

Singapore welcomes pro-racing's most recognizable faces and their legions of fans. The Lion City pulls out all the stops to make its Singapore Grand Prix (SGP) season quite unlike anything that any Formula One® fan has ever experienced.

A milestone in F1 history

The 9th and first street circuit in the year's F1 calendar promises a new record-breaking race in the history of this world-renowned sport. The 2008 Formula One® Singtel Singapore Grand Prix will be the first nighttime street course any F1 racer will ever run.

'This is a fantasy come true. I've been wanting and hoping for a night race for the longest time,' shares top local race car driver Sally Bala Mercad. 'It just brings the game to a whole new level. I know there are things that occur in Singapore you'd only see in videogames.'

Imagine the most advanced motoring technology—all guided by the skilful hands of champions like Kimi Räikkönen and Lewis Hamilton—zooming through the Marina Bay circuit at up to 300kph and with the power of 1,500 lighting projectors illuminating every tire-screeching turn and straight track.

'I think this is going to be very exciting. Singapore really proved to a lot of motorists to make it the best, most dynamic race possible. I would personally want to see how they will fight on the track like daylight,' veteran Filipino racer Roland Hermoso admits.

High-octane sights and sounds

Both Bala Mercad and Hermoso know how outperforming the F1 circuit can get.

In the EPRIs, Hermoso witnessed the legendary Ayrton Senna and the young Michael Schumacher—who was then only starting to make a name for himself—in action at the Silverstone circuit.

'It's a far cry from circuits now with new technology making it safer and more stable. In Singapore, not only the safety of the drivers will be looked after but also the safety of the spectators so they will really enjoy the experience,' he recalls.

Recalling her 2006 F1 experience in Bahrain, Bala Mercad came to a similar conclusion. 'The FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile) is really strict. They will not say 'No' if they think the host country will not be up to their standards. One fracture or a millimeter out of place and that's it! Singapore has the resources, the experience and the commitment for it. It's going to be pretty spectacular!'

She adds that watching the race on televisions will never compare to being there and seeing it live. She fondly recalls how, as a participant in the year's Formula BMW race, chills were up her spine the first time she heard the engines revving up. Standing merely two feet away from the great Schumacher and becoming the proud owner of a race prize won by Giancarlo De Motta are also some of her best F1 memories.

Feeling the rush

The 2008 SGP season provides F1 fans plenty of opportunities to have an equally memorable time to mark this year's milestone. Singapore has lined up many activities guaranteed to keep the excitement going even off the track.

Concerts, art exhibits, fashion shows, auxiliary race events, beer festival and parties are among the thrilling activities that await visitors. For a complete list of what's in store during the SGP Season, visit www.visitsingapore.com/sgpseason.

'Over the years, the F1 scene just keeps getting better, bigger and more exciting,' states Bala Mercad. 'Singapore can put a heavier stamp on it by having the first night race street course.'

There's no escaping the rush of excitement as the racing world charges into the SGP season. With an explosive calendar filled with high-speed road machines, head-turning fans and top-class athletes, Singapore is the hotspot this September. Enjoy the SGP season events and share the roar of engines with several thousand people having the time of their lives being part of F1 history.

UNIQUELY Singapore

visitsingapore.com

Keeping abreast of cancer

By Jen Rojas
Correspondent

AVON'S Bob Bridston and GMA Tonyo Cruz, Sid Preciouro, Ice Cabuche and Abby Cruz show their support for "Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer" Campaign

While breast cancer's frightening statistics can be overwhelming (Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates reports that of 100 females, 26 will be diagnosed with the killer disease, while the Philippine Breast Cancer Network says our country has the highest incidence of breast cancer in Asia and is ranked ninth the world over), a sexually taboo the farther of efforts to make a huge difference in the lives of women afflicted with the disease.

Now, the global beauty company whose crusade against breast cancer began 20 years ago, unveiled recently the latest in its line of fundraising efforts to Breast Cancer campaigns at the Fisher Studios of the Cancer Institute of the Philippine General Hospital.

Fund-raising

Avon Philippines president and general manager Bob Bridston announced new fund-raising campaigns for the PGH's Breast Care Center and select provincial hospitals. While PS from the sale of Avon's limited-edition Hair So Soft Stand and Body Lotion has been awarded for the center, P30 from the sale of a special PINKBEBE T-shirt also goes to a breast cancer fund, and to the buyer's outfit for what many are already heading to a fashionable Book gathering of breast cancer advocates.

On Oct. 3, Avon will assume the celebrity start of 3-kilometer, non-competitive walks in Bacolod, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Dumaguete, Cebu, Dagupan, Davao, Iloilo, Legaspi, Laoag, Malaybalay, Manila, San Fernando, Tacloban, and Vigan. Avon to attract a record-breaking 30,000 participants. The synchronized 16-city walks are definitely one for the books. Still, Avon's real agenda is to call attention to the disease that claims countless lives each year and, more importantly, to show the world that there are countless others who care.

The launch in PGH certainly proved that. In a moving and symbolic show of unity against the deadly disease, Bridston, together with Avon Asia-Pacific regional communications head Leon Migos and ICBC partners VP executive Sr. Orfino Tinio, Philippine Cancer Society board of trustees chair Dr. Roberto Patenio, GMA 7 head of corporate communications Cher Javier, Nestlé brand manager Olivia Pressman, AstraZeneca president Abel Kinzo, Abl marketing manager Dan Tinoco, Globe Telecom regional business head Ofie Montes, Rotary International District 3780 governor Alexander Garog, and an intimate group of breast cancer survivors and supporters, formed a "string of hope" by tying together the pink ribbons they received before the start of the successful event.

Avon launches a record-breaking 16-city walk for its 2008 Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer campaign

BREAST cancer survivors sing "Ever Polis" as guests tie together pink "strings of hope" to show their oneness in the fight against the disease.

PS gave Bob Gorman and wife Mary

MUSIC MAKERS: LOUIE Cruz, Maria Regindin and Jean Ocampo

Lilibeth Lorca, Eggie Apostol and Maan Hontiveros

(From left...seated) EDUCATION Secretary Jesli Lapus, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Presidential Management Staff secretary Cerge Remonde (standing) Daniel Ramos, Mon Gabot, Eggie Apostol, Saint Eliod Maan Hontiveros and Ana Sevilla Morales

PINKIE Sisters, Dindee Santiago, Beth Tujo and Mike Sicuenda Quiao

Nelly's Day like no other

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ANOTHER Nelly's Day when friends, family, her media colleagues, gather in a designated place every month to cheer on that lucky, or blue, correspondent who's won an award or the prize, or lunch, thank you from a viewer.

Then came the surprise! When the September-born among her cheerleaders arrived at the designated place—this time the home of Eggie Dacera-Apostol, Instead of bonding chats—five of them—were greeted with the birthday song and a cake topped and drenched with fruits rather than distinct floral commemoration. Which was no thoughtful of the gang (Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim) rounding the scene victim of the celebration.

A week however, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, sponsored the carnival affair, with other volunteers, Leo Orbos Boys, Cynthia Villar and Immigration Commissioner Mercy Gimenez.

After the delish dinner by a new vendor, in the corn front, JO Philippines and Desserts and Dumplings of London Mangara, the public was invited to sing and...then to dance. Bunny Swanson was unflappable on the dance floor as her husband, PS guru Bob Gorman, rescued Sweet-Sweeter.

So, was it ME Belly's Day? Nelly lapped it all up: the food, the music, the dancing, the toasts and roasts of the night and the sheer pleasure of being with friends who want to be with her.

Nelly had the last and loudest laugh.

LILIA de Lima and Nelly Saulyava

An 'unica hija's' grand birthday bash

RADIANT in pink, Maria Bianca Valeriano

MARIA BIANCA VALERIANO, ONLY daughter of Angelo and Mimi Valeriano, celebrated her 18th birthday on Sept. 13 with a lavish dinner-dance party at Bistro de Mayuba, Roxas Boulevard.

Bianca wore three gowns, one of which is a plunging neckline with pleated front made of taffeta fabric accentuated with embroidery, cut beads, sequins and embellished with Swarovski crystals, designed by Philippine's premiere fashion designer Robert Zamora. Hair and make-up by Cathy Custodio of Mia Gomez.

Debut choreographer was Jessarith Hallik. Event manager were Willy Cutbella, Liza Aglaia Ilo. Photo and video courtesy of Extreme Dimension Photography by Robert Zamora.

OFFICERS and members of Press Media Boosters Organization (PMBO) led by chair Danny Jose

PAGEANTmasters of the ceremonies, Angelo and Mimi Valeriano.

Taking care of business

DR. ABE Pascual and wife Tipsie with children Hilary, Mia, Maui and Jaypee

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

AT 64, DR. ABRAHAM F. Pascual may be a man of few words, but according to his daughter, 33-year-old Mia Pascual-Centeno, "he has a way of telling you he's proud of you. You can see it in his face," the pair with a knowing smile. "He gets misty-eyed."

That's because she's given him many reasons to get all choked up: its design awesome and corporate communications director of Unimak Laboratories, the 62-year-old pharmaceutical business founded by her chemist grandparents Inocencio and Leonora, and elevated to its current status by her two-decade company in the same industry by her chair dad. Mia has made it her job to give consumers more than the best and affordable health care products money can buy.

"Now that we're transitioning into a new generation, we want people to see Pascual Laboratories as a company that's also evolving with the times," says Mia, one of five third-generation Pascuals actively involved in the business.

Her brother Jaypee is in finance; sister Ana Isabel's expert, another brother Mikey is with the family's IT department, and cousin Martin is their legal consultant.

"The company's theme is 'Passion for health, love for life.' We're not just about quality and affordability. We care about you and we care about your life."

Like the generations before her who practiced corporate social responsibility long before there was even a name for it, their grandmother, she says, sent underprivileged children to school, while her father provided

As part of the next generation tasked to manage the family's successful pharmaceutical company Pascual Laboratories, Mia Pascual-Centeno promotes wellness by creating a healthy work environment

LIKE father, like daughter. Dr. Abe Pascual, second generation in the Pascual Lab hierarchy, is Mia's inspiration.

farmers livelihood by tapping them to grow herbal plants. Inocencio's penchant for their flowers (Ixora here), Mia's was found at CEB Mercado Jandeleon with well-being.

Last November, she launched Health 4 Humanity, distributing boxes of her family's medicines and vitamin supplements to finance Manila-based families as part of the company's partnership with the environment group, Habitat for Humanity.

Meanwhile, in the office, she helps create a healthy and positive work environment for the company's over 600 employees. Guests who drop by their Iloilo headquarters, with its "Pin at Citiworks, will note a brighter and more cheerful lobby.

"It used to be gray and dreary and that's not the signal that we want to give off. I want people to feel happy to feel a passion for life, when they enter this place," she explains of the makeover.

The company's logos have likewise been diminished thanks to a brand identity manual she spearheaded.

"It used to break my heart when I'd see our logos course in different sizes, shapes and colors," she admits ruefully. "With the monitoring the manager now's in that we're using, we define."

She's also busy building her staff's morale, "strengthening the culture of the company," she calls it, "getting them into the practice of thinking that who they are and what they do affects themselves and the company. We want them to see beyond their responsibilities as, say, a secretary or an employee. Obviously, they're more than that, they have a bigger role in this office and their lives."

Middle child

The middle child of five says ("I broke the chain," laughs Mia who came after an older sister and brother, and a younger sister and brother), Mia and her siblings were never pressured into joining the family business even, she says with a smile, "with my dad's occasional parsing." Still, it seemed inevitable, as there were career opportunities in her 4 years of Pascual Laboratories, Mia says it where she first "worked" for the company, holding boxes of sample products and helping in their literature before packing them in a bigger box and sending them off to her brother in the sales team.

She returned in November 2002, where, after reaching professional and then grade in New York for a good number of years, came home and accepted the post as her father's assistant.

HIGHER early training helping bosses for Pascual Lab medicines, Mia now enjoys being involved in her family's company in head of design services and corporate communications.

"The school year already started so it was too late for me to get in," the reasons. Mia, however, swayed on as her dad's assistant even as she took on a teaching job at the Ateneo. Behind the scenes school year. Eventually, she let go of teaching "as I realized what I was doing with my day."

Today, her job entails her to be both creative and academic. While ad campaigns allow her to pitch the kind of ideas that "elevate" consumers' lives and way of thinking, her days in an office where most employees and associates have seen the corporate communications division through her awkward years "is a learning experience. But I'm working to show them that I'm worthy of this position. And I'm glad to be working in a very supportive and family-oriented environment."

And, of course, remains the ultimate role model. They also share a passion for what they do.

Acknowledging the impact her dad had on the company ("His vision set the big to fill"), Mia aspires to be like him. "He knows a lot about everything and I admire that about him," says Mia with obvious pride. "I like doing things that add on to me as a person."

Lhuillier couple marks 44th wedding anniversary

MICHEL AND ANNABELLE Lhuillier celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary with an impromptu Sunday luncheon at Nuvo Bistro. That's the latest restaurant they have added to their string of upscale dining places in Cebu City.

The chain started with Bistro Espanol on the road to Manila Lotus Park (Cebu's Forbes Park). Then came Generation along the same road, which has a northern European ambience.

Nuvo, which specializes in Filipino food, opened last year in a palatial setting. It has expanded by way of serving the wine cellar into a steak house aptly called Wagyu.

Nuvo Bistro is popular for its piano music. It can also be used for functions, up to 50 seated and more standing.

For their wedding anniversary, Michel and Annabelle chose the ground floor and opted for a buffet. A favorite target was the specialty of the house: Casoulet, which is similar to cocido. It has duck-liver, varied sausages and pork fillets on a kidney bean stew.

Michel and Annabelle say that next year, their 45th anniversary, will be a big celebration. Everyone is cheerful about it. Especially as the 45th year, but Annabelle quickly quipped, "Huwag muna ang 45 (no need as yet)."

Cebu Cebu

Jaime Piccarrall

Fashion czarina

A week later, still at Nuvo Bistro, Vivian Chio Yuvienco led the Happiness Group in a dinner to honor Mona Russell, whose birthday it has been recently. Present were glamorous Millie Bondoc-Sy, Dr. Genevieve Samson Solano, Bee and Tina Hontiveros and Milagros Bautista.

Virginia Russell is Cebu's undisputed fashion czarina. She often revels how she learned to sew during the war. She un-stitched clothes, took none of the patterns, and restored them.

"Hell-on-earth," she remarked, saying her husband, an honest, civil servicemen, had died in action and she had to fend for herself and their son whom she named William Jr.

Vicing recounted how proud she was when a gift from a prominent family in the mine of the war, ordered her wedding gown. There was no material to buy from non-existent shops, so she used a parachute.

"They were made of the purest white silk," said Nicky, adding that there was a big supply since incendiary bombs were dropped with parachutes. Some did not explode, hanging from trees.

Fellowship party

Next event at the Nuvo Bistro was the fellowship party of La Chaine des Rotisseurs. Michel heads the gourmet organization in the Philippines; Amparito, the Cebu chapter. The number was limited to 30, and the reservation deadline set weeks before. They were to fill here.

Champagne and canapes were served at the ground floor. "Easy on the scallops," whispered a wife to her husband. "Sir there's a whole army upstairs for dinner." But those scallops were accompanying, so everything else being passed around.

Dinner was announced and all went up the curved, carved stairway. It was buffet style but served on our seats were baked onion soup, and the salad which was a complete meal in itself. The greens had come from the Lhuillier farm in northern Cebu where they also have countless blooming orchids, waterfalls, and a zoo. With caged tigers, yet.

On the buffet were special fare of the house, Casoulet, of course, plus Cebu Puerto, braised Goat-y Chorizo with Rosemary, Risotto with lemon mushrooms, and honey-glazed leg of ham at the carving station.

At the evening drew to a close, and after the kitchen brigade had been called for a round of applause, Michel and Amparito had some announcements to make. In October, they are moving to a new home in Monte Lotus Park. It sits on top of a mountain, with a 360-degree view.

In December, the annual formal investiture dinner of La Chaine's Cebu chapter will be held there. Reservations have started to pour in.

A favorite target was the specialty of the house: Casoulet, which is similar to 'cocido'

MICHEL and Amparito Lhuillier—a 44th anniversary at Nuvo Bistro

VIVIAN Yuvienco and Millie Bondoc-Sy

DR. GENEVIEVE Solano and Virng Russell, Cebu's fashion czarina

TALULOT performers

Talulot marks St. Therese feast day

THE TALULOT FESTIVAL (2:15-3:45am; the band day of St. Therese on Oct. 1, 8 a.m.–12 noon, at the grounds surrounding the shrine of St. Therese. The 8 a.m. Mass at the shrine will be followed by a procession starting at the barangay hall. Competitions start at 12 n.m., followed by the awarding.

Rubik's cube challenge

Toys 'R' Us mall held the finalists of Rubik's Cube Speed Challenge 2009 grand finals on Sept. 19, 3 p.m., at Robinsons Galleria Cebu's Center. Prizes are Toys 'R' Us gift certificates. Sony PSP, Samsung Blu-ray, Rubik's gift pack and trophies for the runners-up while the grand prize winner will bring home a Sony PS3 and the chance to compete with their Asian counterparts in the Asian Rubik's Championship slated in Hong Kong on May 8.

GOINGS ON

MCO festival

The Manila Chamber Orchestra Foundation and MCO present "Tales of Wonder" today, 4 p.m., at the Francisco Santiago Hall, everyone, MCO Rent's Town, Makati. Rm. 107, Alta Centa St., Makati. Call 0156058 or 0929-8096305.

Photo contest

Owners of Iguanas, Rider and Gremlin symbols are invited to join the photo fill. E-mail a photo wearing your symbols to sandals_sandals@yahoo.com. Deadline for submission of articles is Oct. 15.

Flea market in Cubao

CUBAO EXPO OR CUBAO X is an exclusive like to call it, is now a little village of quaint boutiques, cafés and restaurants. There are 50 establishments in this L-shaped community. Some are throwbacks to the late 60s while others opened only four months ago.

On Oct. 2, 6 p.m.–12 mn Fashion Walk-Off, artists' Bazaar and Bazaar will be held.

On Oct. 3, 8 a.m.–12 mn, a concert, fair and bazaar; Oct. 5, 5-9 p.m., fair and bazaars.

An October Flea Market Promo is on Oct. 11-12, 18-19, 25-26, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

Holiday weekend bazaar is scheduled Nov. 8, 15, 22 and 29, 3-11 p.m.; Dec. 6, 13-14, 19-20.

Cubao Expo is on Gen. Romulo St., Araneta Center Cubao, QC.

YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HELP BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START

NOW YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO STAND UP AGAINST BREAST CANCER

THROUGH AVON'S KISS GOODBYE TO BREAST CANCER CAMPAIGN

START·START·START·START·START·START·START·START·START

I walk with 30,000
for a healthier tomorrow.

AVON WALK FOR BREAST CANCER

WEAR THE SHIRT · JOIN THE WALK · SUPPORT THE FUND RAISING ACTIVITY

START BUILDING AWARENESS

On October 5, 2008, be one of the 30,000 individuals in 16 key cities who will walk as one to stand up against this disease. By joining the walk, you help spread the word that early detection is key in defeating breast cancer.

START RAISING FUNDS

This year, the Avon Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer (KGBC) campaign will raise funds through the sale of a special KGBC Limited Edition T-shirt and the Avon Skin So Soft Ultra Healing Hand and Body Lotion. Portions of the sale will help maintain the PGH Breast Care Center and selected provincial hospitals. By buying the shirt and the Avon Skin So Soft Ultra Healing Hand and Body Lotion, you help indigent patients get the help that they need.

START BRINGING HEALTHIER TOMORROWS

Now is the time to start bringing hope-filled tomorrows to many women battling breast cancer. With your support, we can all start to make a big difference in the lives of these women and men, everywhere!

JOIN THE AVON WALK HAPPENING IN THESE 16 LOCATIONS ON OCTOBER 5, 2008, 6:00AM

Bacolod City Lagoon	Iloilo Freedom Park
Batangas City Plaza	Legaspi Avon Branch
Cabanatuan Freedom Park	Pacific Mall, Lucena City
Cagayan de Oro Avon Branch	Malolos Provincial Capitol Plaza
Cauayan City Cultural Center	SM Pampanga
Cebu City Sports Center	Tacloban Avon Branch
Dagupan City Plaza	Plaza Burgos, Vigan
Davao Avon Branch	SM Mall of Asia

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

Paris-based Rose Anne Cu-unjieng de Pampelonne is the latest Filipino designer to earn acclaim abroad

September Vogue features Filipina's jewelry designs

T'NT TRENDS & TRENDINGS

Antoine Saw Diego

PARIS-BASED ROSE ANNE Cu-unjieng de Pampelonne is not (or be the next big Philippine fashion star, if she isn't one already.

Her bejeweled accessories or "wearable conversations" as she likes to call them, were recently featured in In Style (modeled by pop superstar Rihanna) and Elle. This month, they got prominent exposure in Vogue (Rachel Weisz on the cover) in the magazine's jewelry report.

It was also in that same magazine that she was featured about two years ago in one of Paris' "secret addresses" for her embellished clothing designs, which are made in Nepal. She is again cast in the spotlight as her accessories are making a big dent in the creative and crowded world of international fashion.

Last June, I went to Paris to interview and photograph this design powerhouse for this newspaper and for the cover of the Philippine Tatler which comes out this October. We did her shoot and interview at one of the homes she designed, a gorgeous and cozy two-story apartment with a breathtaking view of the Eiffel Tower.

I have known Rose Anne for quite some time and whenever I go to the City of Light, we manage to make time for catching up. She is always very accommodating and kind-hearted. She loves to entertain and husband with the city's cuisine, chic crowd.

The last time I was there, the wife of Louis Vuitton chair and chief executive Yves Carcelle, Rebecca, was giving Rose Anne a birthday party. Invited were some Filipinas like the very lovely Yvette Lhuillier-Warsoff (Mendoza's beautiful sister and a carbon copy of her mom Amparito) and Ika Agrupis whose fashion and accessories are sold in Harvey's as well as in Bobs.

Passion

Rose Anne's passion for creativity and sense of style has always been innate. She has taken lessons in painting in Florence and design in Paris. A good friend predicted her to open an interior design company upon seeing her work on the apartment she was then living in.

Today, she is an accomplished interior designer with a coveted clientele all over the world. Her home has been featured in countless magazines and this column reported the coverage of her own home in Elle Décor (UK) last April.

She also had a showroom in Manila called Antares (now owned by Baby Girl Felicia) and her customers include her sister Liliet Virata, Conrad Cheng, Anton Mendoza and Doris Ho.

Her jump to fashion, and now jewelry, has progressed currently. She says it all started with embroidery that did not work on the clothes she designed. She kept them and made them into necklaces.

When asked how growing up in the Philippines has influenced her work, she answered, "What I appreciate about having been born in the Philippines is the Filipino sense of flexibility and diplomacy. Local measures area brutal banksters) as they help cushion the rough bumps along the way."

Prompted on her why she never here an extension/jewelry design after being an interior and fashion designer, she said, "I know that it is and to have added another profession, albeit one which does complement the other, but it just happened."

In here class the past it altogether—being an interior, fashion, jewelry designer and a wife and mother.

Rose Anne has been married for 20 years to the investment banker, Baron Bruno de Pampelonne. They live together with their three handsome sons Dominic, Ludovic and Alexis. (Incidentally her oldest son Dominic photographed her for the Tatler cover).

She says, "I'm so busy that it would be a great luxury to have more time. Problem is, even when I'm dead, I don't want to stop, because I love what I'm doing... When I feel I'm beginning to be overwhelmed, I go home."

Rose Anne adds, "I am looking forward to spending more time with my family; they are really my most incredible inner circle. Hopefully more years of cruising and, watchfully, finally learning how to delegate is the good old Filipino way."

WITH their parents, Clarence and Lani Chua, and Philip and Margie Juico

THE CHUAS

JUICO-CHUA

The councilor and (ex) fashion editor are a beautiful couple

'Later on in life, you'll realize it's not what you see with your eyes that counts, but what you see with your heart'

"LOOK AROUND YOU," BISHOP Soriano Villegas spoke to the young lovely couple kneeling before the altar, his gaze scanning the chapel. "You see beautiful people everywhere...So much to see...Yet later on in life, you'll realize it's not what you see with your eyes that counts, but what you see with your heart."

Bishop Villegas' touching and beautiful homily was a contrast to the rough, dreary weather outside the beautiful chapel in Tagaytay Highlands. It was windy, drizzling, cool dark for a mid-afternoon, yet inside the Shadow de Dios chapel, it was warm and cozy.

Quezon City councilor Joseph Juico and his glamorous bride, Trisha Chua, couldn't have asked for a more romantic Saturday.

It was a much publicized wedding, though not by design. Joseph found himself on the front page news when Catholic priests reportedly threatened not to wed the couple, given Joseph's bold stand on planned parenthood. Like it turned out, the couple were never really turned down by any city or canal church because early on, they had really planned their wedding to be in Tagaytay).

All that, however, was a distant past as a few km. friends and colleagues drove all the way to Tagaytay for the wedding.

Bishop Villegas gave precious advice to the pair. "Good children are made not as La Salle." (Joseph and his dad, Popoy, are alyed in the storied La Salle-ian.) "Good children are made at home."

Then, as if taking a dig at the groom's recent distractions, the Bishop told Trisha, Joseph is a good man."

In fact, Trisha has known that since the day they met six years ago—on a blind date. "She's ticked from day one. Since then we've been together," she said in an interview in the Sweetme Hardcore Living.

The young couple have shared not only a lifestyle, but also pets. They've shared "joint custody" (Trisha's words) of Sofie, a Shih Tzu, and Yoda, a yellow Labrador.

Trisha was fashion editor of Metro magazine. Then she was Lazada manager for luxury brands Scottish and Fil...

On her wedding day, Trisha looked so beautiful in a gown by Patrick Ramos that, in obscene acts made giving it a vintage elegance. Her back was bare, dainty lace formed a soft veil from her back to the ground. Her hair in a chun chignon made her look like a peruvian bride.

I'd always thought that my Lod hidden editor (in Metro) would look lovely on her wedding day. Yes, there she was...the more beautiful bride.

THE RADIANT bride in Patrick Ramos Diaz gown about to walk into the chapel

NEWLYWEDS Joseph and Trisha Juico

ROMANTIC view of Midlands reception

WITH Magdalena Fresan, Polly Aquino and Aida Villanueva

THE JUICOS

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Palawan is the Bahamas of the East

THE LATE GREEK TYCOON Aristotle Onassis has Skorpios, an island on which he wooed and won the widow of an American president, Jackie Bouvier. Sir Richard Branson, the maverick owner of Virgin Atlantic, has Kimbara, a 74-acre hideaway among the British Virgin Islands.

The universal dream, apart from world peace and discovering a cure to all diseases, probably would undoubtedly be to own one's very own private island. Imagine that: a tropical idyll surrounded by the crystal-clear sea...or at least a substantial portion of one—all to yourself and to whomever you want to share it with.

A whole stretch of golden sand to frolic and sink your toes in and...relax and...relax and...to convince your Bitchlemonaise or Bali-inspired wife—or a world-class resort is!

Well, lets us more. Given that remain spots in the country are natural for-beach for tourism, a perfectly situated beach-front would, indeed, incite you to build more than just sandcastles on it.

"The best location for property and one of the best investments, right now especially, is in the Calamianes Group of Islands since dubbed as the 'Bahamas of the East,'" says Linda Cruz and Shelly Mojica of the 12-year-old Mojica & Associates Property Consultants.

"This area is just growing. It's just starting to develop. And the best, best news is that property is now when there's really nothing. Here yet, when the master plans for the area is just unraveling."

The Calamianes Group of Islands, located in the northwest tip of the country's last frontier, Palawan, is home to some of the Philippines' most untouched natural treasures, including spectacular all-year-round sunsets, lagoons and breathtaking limestone cliffs, all set against the dazzling blue of sea and sky.

Known as a mandarin extension from Palawan remains largely unexplored, with hundreds of islands making up its enigmatic splendor.

Coron

One such island, Coron, has been gaining publicity for more than just its incredible dive sites. It has long been a favorite haunt of Europeans seeking a blend of enchantment, peace and seclusion. Also, Coron along with the nearby island of Culion is the home of the country's most diverse marine and wildlife, containing unspoiled sea and coral reefs present nowhere else in the Philippines.

With more airlines like Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific, Asian and Asian Spirit flying in daily, and inspired by growing tourist arrivals, Busuanga airport has recently been rebuilt as a bigger and more modern structure.

With this much being paved and more infrastructure being put up (plans for an international airport are underway), it is clear that the surrounding islands are all set to boom. Already, famous British resort chain Banyan Tree has seen the area's huge potential and is wasting no time in drafting architectural plans.

"With the world of real estate, you can never go wrong with buying in an area that's on the verge of development," Mojica continues, "It will always appreciate. You are buying land that you can build on someday especially given the potential of the island."

Cruz, who has made Coron his second home since buying Banyan two years ago, sees the huge advantages of buying island realtor than city property.

"In the city, developments just expand outwards or upwards, whereas for the islands, there is a saturation point, and there is a limited number of islands available. The property value of an island skyrockets faster than land in the city because of this scarcity," he adds.

"To own a piece of paradise is a world-wide dream. And as for reselling value, there will always be a long queue of dreamers."

Filipinos' mistake

Cruz and Mojica point out the biggest mistake of Filipinos, property-wise, in thinking where most of the land is owned by foreigners.

"The Filipinos should away from tax-declaration properties, which was mostly the type of land being sold then. But the foreigners know there were just as good as titled land having the value of gold, so long as you pay the annual taxes. Boracay is one huge opportunity Filipinos have missed out on."

Mojica, whose father was born in Culion, Palawan, says price of commercial property in the Calamianes Islands (whether island, land to town proper, or exclusive beach estate in a portion of an island) is dependent on size, access, distance to mainland, quality of beach.

Titled property starts from P400-P1,000 and above per square meter and raw dun property goes for lower; both sold by the hectare. Presently, beach-front properties in Busuanga run P927,000 per square meter.

Buying an island could be tricky given that there are all sorts of nuances out there. It's always safer to deal with licensed and registered realtors who can explain and assist in the more bureaucratic ways involved, especially in such an exclusive process.

And so the supreme luxury is all set to become a reality: no mansion on island, sure, but everybody aspires to live or own one to look under the glorious sun detached from the rest of the planet. This is the ultimate luxurious lifestyle. After all, not everyone literally in Nielsen Magicdata or the world's 100 richest owns a private island.

Contact Shelly Mojica, shellymoji@mediagroup.com.ph or (632) 527-7562

LOUIE CRUZ and Shelly Mojica

PHOTOS BY NIKKI BAUTISTA

Goodbye, Boracay. Welcome, Palawan's Calamianes group of islands

Shoppers can never go wrong with Cambodian traditional silverwork, gemstones, wood and stone carvings, and silk

Going amok—or 'loklak'—in Angkor

By Virgil Cabagnot
Correspondent

Land of bargains

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR mid-priced accommodations and want something more than the usual mediocre-with-no-service establishments, here are some of the more interesting options.

Though the tourist border on rattlesnakes, Earthwalkers (www.earthwalkers.ca) offers good value, with rates as low as $5 per person in dormitory-style quarters. Guests stay in newly renovated two-story buildings that radiate from a pool (shaped like a fish, of course, in reference to walking).

There's a lounge where guests sit around a billiard table, swapping travel tips and tales.

Advertising itself as "pet-friendly," the Golden Banana Boutique Hotel and Still (www.golden-banana.com) has become remarkably popular with not just the pink crowd but all types of travelers.

A building that will house 28 rooms is presently under construction. The Golden Banana started as a cheap and cheerful B&B, then expanded into a higher-priced boutique hotel across the street.

Imagine Angkor (www.imagineangkor.com), though somewhat far from the town center, is highly recommended if you're looking for somewhere quiet and restful.

The rooms are spotlessly clean and the rates affordable. As a bonus, you might get to meet the chalkboard owner, Ann Ryder, who first came to Cambodia as a volunteer dentist. Imagine operators on a unique commitment to "responsible tourism," actively contributing to the local community.

The **Hotel Garden** (www.thehotelgarden.info), Amit's blue-colored and managed, is what used to be the residence of a wealthy family, is enveloped in an air of exclusivism brought about by a lush tropical garden.

The place is also for foodies, with Debbie, the owner, running Cooks in Tuk Tuks, a culinary tour that takes participants to the market to shop for ingredients that are then cooked into traditional Khmer dishes.

Then there's Wendy's Hotel (www.wendyshotel.com), a seven-room boutique hotel, done along the clean lines of contemporary minimalist style, with a rainwater swimming pool and rooftop restaurant tips among its amenities. Rates here start from $70.

A standard caveat, Elite Service, run by Orbino, a Frenchman, and his generous Cambodian wife (his assistant when he worked at F&B manager in one of the big hotels), is the exact opposite, with five rooms in very rustic surroundings. Meals are served in a semi-circle bamboo hut by a moony, overgrown pond.

But, without doubt, the most unusual of the lot is The Grand Hotel Angkor, (www.thegrandhotelangkor.com), which, as you might have gathered from the name, has only one guest room. It is actually a luxury suite on the top floor of one of the renovated colonial buildings near the Old Market. It may have soured on you both $250 a night.

Last but not least, The Cookhouse, an 11-room boutique hotel set in a quiet residential area of town, just across the river from the Old Market, will open in late November.

The hotel, a traditional wooden Khmer house converted into a modern hotel, will stand on spacious, landscaped grounds centered on a swimming pool. There will be a cafe, restaurant, bookstore and art shop on the premises. Amenities will include massage service and free Wi-Fi. (The website, www.thecookhouse.toonsphon.com, is presently under construction.)

Where and what to eat

Most hotels include breakfast with their room rates, and it is usually a hearty buffet, generous to both selection and servings, so you can fill up before hitting the road to the temples.

For lunch and dinner, the choice has a good selection of places in and around the center of town, though be forewarned that the variety is nowhere near what you get in Manila or other big modern cities.

One other thing you might want to bear in mind is the fact that Cambodian food is not fast and spicy, unlike other Southeast Asian cuisines. It is really quite mild, even when ordered extra spicy and many and you imagine it's going to be fiery and scorching to the palate.

Only two places in Siem Reap claim to serve authentic royal Khmer cuisine—the Raffles and Angkor Palace.

I've had the pleasure of dining in both places, but I also liked the regular Cambodian dishes I tasted on lunch, though I hasten to add that I have no idea what the names of the dishes were as I was too engaged in conversation with my fellow Pinoy diners. The only one I remember is Chicken Amok, as I found this rather amusing, conjuring up a bilateral image of a chicken running amok. In fact, the dish is the Khmer version of our own guinataan, with bite-size morsels of chicken cooked in coconut cream combined in banana leaf.

Chicken Amok is a very popular Cambodian dish, and so is Beef Lokkak, chunks of beef simmered in a tomato-based sauce. You're bound to run into these two dishes in any place serving Cambodian food, in the same way that adobo and Ambeves are mainstays of Filipino cuisine.

BRILLIANT colors of Lao Ornamentals

GEM of the gigantic lotus that crowns the towers of Bayon

MODERN fusion presentation meets ancient Khmer cuisine

The end or genus entry triplets were carefully to the waiter which one you wanted as one can easily get mixed up with the other) at the Dinner Restaurant of the River Garden can be excellent, and so can the fresh spring rolls. That style, I have never been there for dinner, but lunch is a good time for eating al fresco, with dappled sunlight falling on the lovely garden.

There are several places in town that serve Indian curries when your taste buds are itching for something really hot. I have tried most and all these places and out of the two I recommend Restaurants on 9th Street. I especially liked the Curries Restaurant on 9th Street. Conveniently sited in the middle of things, with dappled sunlight falling on the lovely garden.

There are several places in town that serve Indian curries when your taste buds are itching for something really hot. I have tried most and all these places and out of the two I recommend Restaurants on 9th Street. I especially liked the Curries Restaurant on 9th Street. Conveniently sited in the middle of things, with dappled sunlight falling on the lovely garden.

Another lovely garden setting can be found at the Chivit Blue Garden, where diners can sit in little alcove settings while the lovely creatures flit in and out of the lush vegetation. The food we tried here for lunch was spicy tasty.

There is a plethora of eateries in Siem Reap that get packed with customers in the evening. Each one features a thematic décor and serves its own selections of specialties. Some, like Rumpuls Without Borders, have a distinctly contemporary look and ambience that sets it decidedly apart from many of the others.

The same can be said about Hyatt's, which, like the Sheraton Blue Garden, is located on the eastern side of the river (approximately from the hotel of the same name).

Here the tables are set on an outdoor deck under a high open roof held up by a thick metal framework. It's a sleek fusion of the old and the new, traditional and modern. And as there are no walls, one gets the pleasant sensation that one is dining outdoors.

Visit the Siem Reap's first Les Orientaliers, which boasts what is probably the most colorful restaurant décor in the whole of Siem Reap. Minutely constructed, it delights the eye with its vivid combination of brilliant red and yellow mixed with electric blue.

If you'd like to search some remotely upscale shopping with your dinner, the Apsara Theater lets you do just that, in a beautiful teak circular hall in the midst of traditional Khmer architecture.

The Alliance Café, too, offers an elegant dinner setting, in a carefully restored French colonial building, the former local home of the Alliance Française.

At Raffles, both the fine dining restaurant and less formal café serve consistently good food, prepared with the skill-ful touches of executive chef Wayan Sitawa, an Indonesian who speaks a smattering of Filipino. Also at the Raffles, The Conservatory is a cozy venue for enjoying an aperitif or digestif in the evening, with soothing classical music played on a gleaming baby grand by a Filipino, my brother Carlson.

What to buy

Cambodia is renowned for the artistry and quality of its traditional silverwork. This comes as jewelry, rings, bracelets, earrings as decorative utensil pieces shaped as animals (elves, elephants, birds). Silver pieces can be found in many shops and are certainly worth buying.

The entire is rife of wood and stone carvings, mostly modern replicas of ancient designs (be wary of buying "antiques" as they will most likely turn out to be fake or relatively recent, and, if authentic, they may get you into trouble with the authorities).

Silk, of course, is an excellent buy, in the form of shawls, scarves, fashion pieces, table runners, clothing material and even paintings. There are other types of fabric as well, samples of which can be seen at the Old Market, Central Market and Night Market. All these same places, vendors are known through a wide range of local arts and crafts, from wind chimes to hand-made paper.

Connoisseurs are sure but possible buy through you will need an expert eye to be able to tell the gems from the glass.

yoU sept-oct out now!

Rookie! **YoU** with our second issue, **YoU** magazine, the Philippines' first fashion and music magazine has **Bruce Evangelista** on the cover. See Bruce in a new light, a different perspective, as she goes through exciting changes in her life.

YoU magazine focuses on two things that people, especially the young, are very passionate about – music and fashion. This issue presents street fashion tidbits, inspired by trendy toddlers all under fifty. **Debbie Harry, Francoise Hardy, Madonna, and Marianne Faithful** to name a few. We also present you with the most exciting local releases of the year from **Up Dharma Down, Nyoy Volante, Cinderella, Pedicab**, and **Spongecola**. Totally not gummy!

We visited one of the country's hippest campuses, **De La Salle—College of St. Benilde** and featured students donning their cool school getups. And for those always looking for great bargains, check out our "Where Rocks" section featuring colorful finds thrifty for the home, laptops on a budget, and D.I.Y. ways to rejuvenate your jeans. We also hang out with kinky **Jake Cuenca**, while he plays his first sport fencing and **Pinky Prescod**.

For more interesting reads and eye-popping prices, grab **YoU**'s September-October issue. You might be our lucky winner as we give away colorful **Nokia watches** and **Nokia Xpress Music phones**. Through fashion and music, we want you to express yourself and be **YoU** for a change.

Grab a copy at your favorite newsstands or call 932.0764 or 759.2023 today and save P102 for annual subscriptions!

Travel Briefs

Macau's new offerings

LAS VEGAS SANDS CORP. recently opened its third Macau property, Four Seasons Hotel Macau. The celebration also saw the world premiere of Cirque du Soleil's entirely acrobatic show "ZAIA" in the Cirque's custom-built Theater at the Venetian Macao as well as the official opening of "The Shoppes at Four Seasons," the first luxury shopping district in this tourist destination.

Located in the COTAI strip, touted to be the Las Vegas of Asia, Four Seasons Hotel Macau features 360 guest rooms and suites, food and beverage outlets, pool and garden areas as well as conference, banquet and business services and facilities.

Rajanihan joins DOT campaign in Russia

Rajanihan dance company joins the Department of Tourism in its campaign to market the Philippines as a tourist destination of choice in Russia.

After their participation in a tourism-selling mission in St. Petersburg, Russia, a delegation from Rajanihan will perform at the Crystal Palace and Luxury Hall on Sept. 2010-26 in Moscow. The Leisure and Luxury Fair is the biggest international trade fair for business and tourism in the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States. It will feature tourism products, tour operators, tourism offices, airports and airlines including the hotel industry.

Power lunch

If the aim is to impress, one can never go wrong with Restaurant Verbena's attentive service, excellent creations from Discovery Country Suites' kitchen team and view of the Taal Lake and Volcano.

Restaurant Verbena's Power Lunch Menu is composed of the 5-Marinated Shells'scene, Arugula Salad and Basil-infused Vegetable broth with Braised Cherry Tomatoes and Manchego Cheese, Pan-Fried and Spice Crusted Fish Fillet and Bourbon's Chocolate Mousse. Call 883-8711 or 02.661.013-6367.

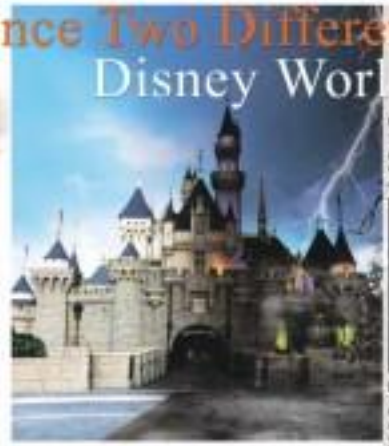
Oktoberfest in Cebu

Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, host to 1991-Mini Hotel, brings back the annual tradition in Decorated, Oct 10-11. Secluded will hold a German-beer festival replete with the Bavarian Sound Express, an 11-piece band from Munich by Lufthansa.

Guests who will join the festivity will get to enjoy a Weekender Package at the hotel starting at P7,800 net for a deluxe two-night stay with buffet breakfast for two, plus other freebies and discounts. In conjunction with Oktoberfest, Cafe Marco will host a German food festival Oct. 1-14. Call 253-111 local 8045 or e-mail at mmplaza@marcopolohotels.com.

Experience Two Different Disney Worlds In One Day!

Have a fantastic and spine-tingling holiday with your loved ones this upcoming holiday season and join the Halloween festivities in Hong Kong Disneyland starting on September 26 to November 1, 2008. Not only can you see and take pictures with Disney classic characters like Mickey, Minnie, Donald Duck, Snow White and many others, but also enjoy every moment to the fullest in this wonderful world.



WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE

The magic immediately unfolds when the day at Hong Kong Disneyland begins. With cavorting Disney characters, fabulous surprises, thrilling rides and unforgettable performances, the day won't end until the nighttime lights in the land where dreams become reality.

Disney on Parade

Floats, musicians, dancers and our beloved Disney Characters in a magical procession that brings the streets of Main Street, U.S.A. to life will definitely put a smile on everyone's face. This wondrous promenade features well-loved Disney Characters from such classics as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" to today's family favorites.

Jungle River Cruise

This classic river voyage of adventure lets the cruisers brave mysterious jungles with surprises around every bend. As the river (including an epic battle of fire and water. Wild beasts such as hippos, elephants, cobras and orangutans meet voyagers at close encounters. Not to mention an encounter with the most feared animal in the jungle – the wisecracking skipper!

Autopia

Autopia gives kids of all ages the chance to get behind the wheel of their very own space-age automobile & hit the road of tomorrow. A drive that will take them along futuristic streets, story corners & dazzling dips that will make them clamor for more!

WHERE FUN, FEAR & LAUGHTER RESIDE

This Halloween, the darkness once again takes over Disneyland. Courage is put to the test with all new thrilling attractions including the Grizzly Gulch, Glow-In-The-Park Parade, Space Mountain – Ghost Galaxy & more. All the darkness, all the fear, all the fun. All at Hong Kong Disneyland.

Grizzly Gulch

Explorers look their weapons on a brutal ground, awakening the demons who possessed everything & everyone inside. Year by years, the serpent has now been found in the depths of Adventureland, ready to be explored by those who dare. Getting into the jungle is one thing. Getting out is another matter.

Glow-In-The-Park Parade

Once a year when darkness prevails, the spooky sensation glows in the dark and rocks the Park. Visitors get to join Jack Skellington and his creepy Pumpkin Men and behold the horror of Dr. Frankenstein's Lab. Experience with the Disney Villains and gasp at the shrieking Red Hatters with their spine-chilling acrobatics. The year's whole new ghostly Fiesta Step will create a rousing finale. Visitors should be on the look out as these ghostly tunes share their private treasure.

Space Mountain – Ghost Galaxy

The darkness of the outer regions of an alternate Universe is explored in this fast and furious rollercoaster. Space Mountain has been transformed with a hauntingly eerie sound track, ghoulish monstrosities and scary apparitions which lurk around unsuspecting

Demon Jungle

Explorers look their weapons on a brutal ground, awakening the demons who possessed everything & everyone inside. Year by years, the serpent has now been found in the depths of Adventureland, ready to be explored by those who dare. Getting into the jungle is one thing. Getting out is another matter.

Haunted Buffet & Halloween Special Merchandise

Warm your bones with some comfort food. There will be Haunted Buffet at the Enchanted Garden, Halloween menu at Royal Gourmet Cafe and Special drinks at Corner Cafe. At the Market House Bakery you'll find scary sweet treats that are simply to die for. And you can also grab some of our all-new souvenirs. There's over 160 Mickey, Jack Skellington and Winnie the Pooh themed goodies, such as chocolates, pins, key chains, T-shirts, stationery, candies and more. Don't forget to get yourself a spooky headband to enhance your costume.

www.hongkongdisneyland.com

Sunday LIFESTYLE

THE SANTOS Geraldine Ayala "Weng" Santos, Joseph Miguel Santos, left, Louie Jacob Santos, and Gabbie Santos enjoy a family moment on a rolling hill...

In this environment, they relish life

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor
Photos By Robert Reyes

A PHOTOGRAPH OF A WOMAN, placidly sitting under a mango tree, in a garden of orchids and ornamentals, won a prize in the photo contest "Why I love Ayala Westgrove Heights." The winner, businessman Joselito "Joel" Santos, remembers how his subject, his wife Geraldine, was relishing a tranquil moment in their garden when he snapped his D70 Nikon. His photo was trying to say that in Westgrove, one finds peace. The Filipino word for serenity, he says, is "ginhawa" (relief). Add a waffle, it becomes "ginhawa" (home).

To him, there's no place in the world like a Westgrove home. Santos has lived most of his life in Ayala Land subdivisions—Ayala Alabang, Dasmariñas Village and now Ayala Westgrove Heights. His father, Joselito Sr., lives with Makati Development Corporation, the construction subsidiary of Ayala Corp., was the project manager of Ayala Alabang Village (AAV). The Ayala real estate development business was with the Ayala Corp. holding company back then.

On May 10, 1978, the family moved to 5 Nielson Drive, the first home to be completed in AAV. Inspired by the fashion de jour, it was made of bricks, tropical hardwood and with tropical windows. Santos was 14 then and lived there until 1986. The development then was so new that the concrete road ended at their place.

A decade later, the Ayala real estate business was spun off into a separate company, Ayala Land. Today, Ayala Land Premier is the brand that carries the Ayala tradition and heritage of building the most distinctive and highly valued living communities, whether subdivisions or condominiums.

Pioneering communities

Thirty years ago, AAV was very suburban. There was hardly any traffic to get there from Makati. The wide tree-lined avenues and clean air were a refreshing break from the pollution in the central business districts. He recalls that at night, one could hear the nocturnal chorus of the tropics—the crickets, cicadas and frogs. "Ayala Alabang back then was like what Westgrove is today," he says.

Since he was enrolled in high school at Marist, Marikina, he'd spend weekdays in the family compound in Cubao and go home to AAV on weekends. In college at De La Salle University, Santos found it convenient to commute from AAV to Taft. There was a village jeep that ran its rounds on the hour for commuters. Santos would drive up to Alabang Town Center and take the air-conditioned Love Bus. Ayala Corporation also had a daily shuttle bus from AAV to Makati Stock Exchange. It was travel in style, he recalls—a bus with a bar and lounge chairs. Sometimes he'd be the only passenger taking that 20-km ride that took only 30 minutes.

In 1986, the family moved to Makati where they already owned a house on Perpetuo Street, Dasmariñas Village. Although he wanted the quiet environs of AAV, the family wanted accessibility to the heart of the city. As in most Ayala Land developments, the village has kept the trees that hinge the landscape. "In this day, residents still relish the chirping sound of the birds and the night of squirrels—yes, squirrels—now lying around. The proximity outdoor bio travel time to La Salle.

Their home was a walk away from Ayala Center. It was so accessible that the boys could watch movies twice a week, have snacks at Pancake House near Rizal Theater, enjoy nature in the aviary near the old Ayala Museum.

In 1993, Santos got married. He and wife Geraldine stayed in Dasmariñas where his daughters were also raised.

One day, his brother-performer Jon Santos, guested at an Ayala Land corporate launch. (Mark of a Bengal cat to actions, Jon was impressed with the amenities and thorough masterplan of the community—underground cables for utilities, parking bays that eliminate the filth of cars on the streets, and wide pedestrian lanes.

He broached to his older brother the idea of moving to Westgrove. His eldest, Gabrielle Maria or Gabbie, was studying at St. Scholastica's Manila. On learning that Ayala Land donated land and generously funded the construction of a school building at St. Scholastica in Westgrove, the Santoses decided to move south to Westgrove. Geraldine found work in the school to keep her busy.

Distinctive living

Today, aside from St. Scholastica's, other schools near Westgrove are Carlos Dini Ricaso and La Salle Canlubang. Santos appreciates the fact that the development is alive yet already. At Westgrove, some 100 households have sprung up in eight years, compared with subdivisions with rapid population growth of some 500 households at the same time.

When the family moved to Westgrove, Santos' children (all girls), Gabbie, Josephine Maria, Theresa Maria and Andrea Maria, crossed the hurdle and trouble of city life. The twinkling fireflies and the noisy crickets were now to them.

"You can live longer here. It's far from pollution," says Santos. "You're not in the mall as often and you find yourself closer to nature."

During Holy Week or summer vacation, or allows day over. They would organize a barbecue cookout to the backyard and watch an outdoor movie.

Saturday nights, residents hear Mass at the clubhouse; the community church is being built. Since Westgrove was originally a mango orchard, during harvests, residents hold a festival and enjoy the bounty. The most romantic place is the lagoon where joggers meet and small talk, or people can sit on a bench and read, or gather in a picnic at the gazebo.

There are those big clubhouses being planned in the subdivision for the convenience of the residents. The main clubhouse and Kidzgrove are now in full use. A competition size Spa in Center will be completed soon.

Since they moved to their new environment, the family has taken up triathlon. When they were in Dasmariñas, Santos was a partner in a rock-climbing gym. "When we moved here, we had to find a new sport." The girls got into biking and pedal around the village for a good 15 km every week. They also walk to and from the clubhouse—a total two kilometers. They do 60-80 laps in the 25-meter clubhouse pool.

Santos has coached the Westgrove team for several summers now. He trained some kids how to swim, then formed a triathlon team that joined competitions. "I didn't charge. I wanted to keep the neighbors' kids away from trouble. As a support, Ayala Land Premier would help sponsor the annual youth triathlon in Westgrove which I organize," says Santos. One girl who first in Bel-Air, joined the summer competition. When the parents came over to watch the event, they decided to buy the property. Since then, she's been training in triathlon.

The Santoses' athletic lifestyle is augmented by a vegetarian diet. The family buys organic vegetables in the country market in the shopping area outside the subdivision and suggested at the Adventist University in Silang, Cavite. Rosiel's grocery is near the Laguna Technopark, an industrial park for manufacturing plants.

Close to the subdivisions, a community center has a salon, Bank of the Philippine Islands, a drugstore and a convenience store. When the Santoses want a variety of leisure activities, they still prefer Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center in Makati or Tagaytay City. The place is also near Southern Luzon Memorial Hospital, a tertiary hospital and a police station near Technopark.

Worry-free living

The family feels secure in the environment—given the control the place, even the hilly terrain. When the family moved in in 2000, the security guards would meet and exit the residents in the Technopark. Since the old space and adequate security, the children feel free to move around.

One of the charms of living in Westgrove is it is conducive to building a close-knit community. Visitors could knock on the door to look at the architecture of a home. Once a couple, a British national, Peter Sutcliffe, and his Filipina wife, did on order of the Santos residence. On learning that Santos had a construction business, they tapped him to be their contractor. Sutcliffe had a studio built in his home and gave painting lessons to Gabbie. When the builder finished, Gabbie joined and sold a few works.

When a severe typhoon would disable power lines, Westgrove would be the first subdivision to have electricity restored. Santos quotes a priest saying that Westgrove villagers were more privileged in that aspect.

Water was never a problem. "Ayala Alabang has been around for 30 years, even as the population increased and became more developed, there was never any water shortage. Same with Cavite," Santos says, noting how the Ayala Land subdivisions are properly conserved and their noise remains strong over the years.

It can't happen soon. Australia who wanted to retire in the Philippines bought a property beside the Santoses. "Some subdivisions are abandoned in 20 years. A nearby subdivision has only one household after all these years. With an Ayala Land development, he knew he was making a sound investment."

JOEL Santos' winning photo that best expresses "Why I Love Ayala Westgrove Heights"

CLOCKWISE from right: Joel Santos and wife Geng, twins Andie and Tori, Gabbie and Joey

CORNERSTONE The plaque marks the Santos house in Ayala Alabang. It reads: "This is the first house constructed in The New Alabang Village, a real estate development of Ayala Corporation. It was completed on May 13, 1978."

BIKING and triathlon—the ideal activities to take up next for this sports-minded family, due to the wide open spaces and secure environment of their community

Q

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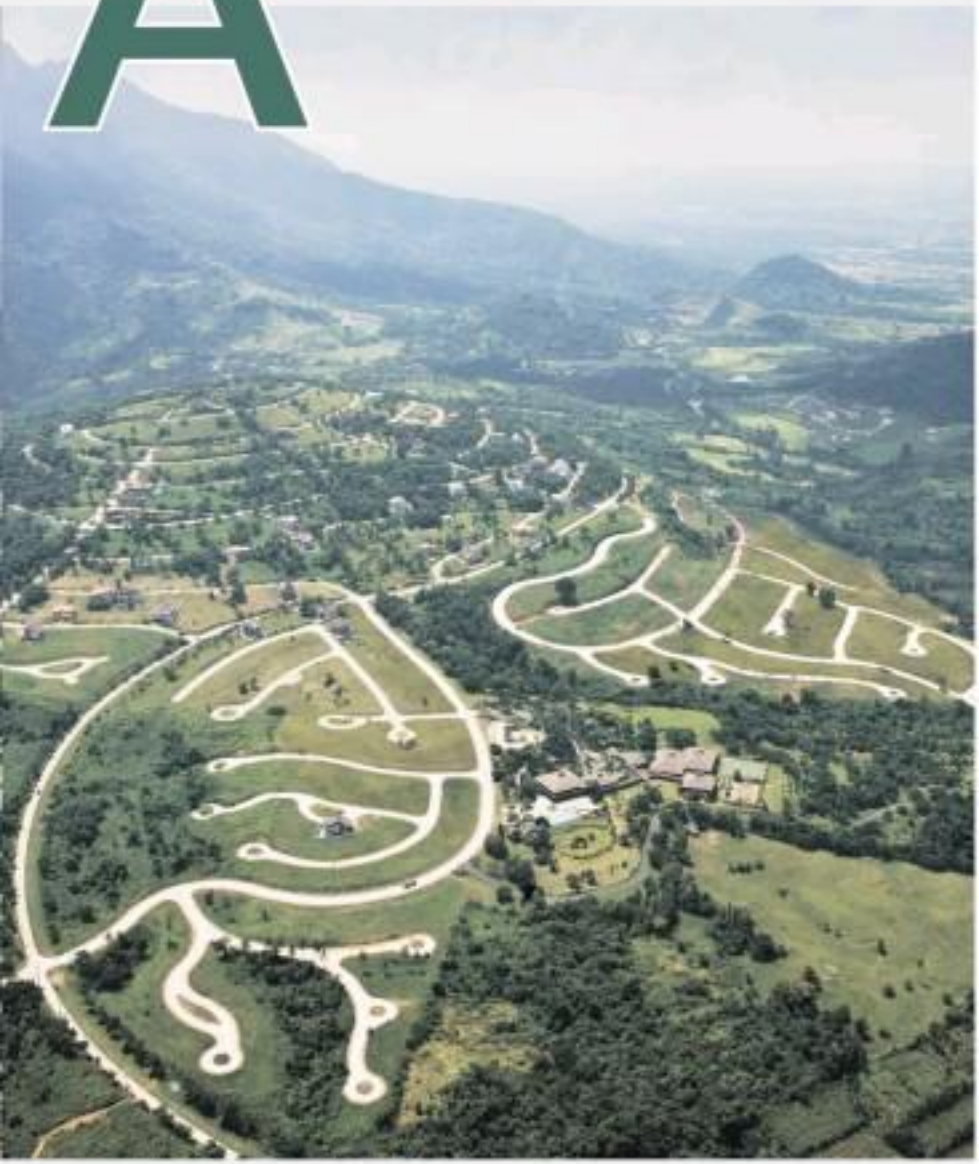

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Gabby blames manager's calls

By Marinell R. Cruz and Rayzel San Diego Jr.

"I TOLD MRS. FLAMINIANO not to call him, but she did. She should not have involved my father in our problems," said actor Gabby Concepcion, whose father Rolito died on Tuesday night.

Gabby said Rolito's fatal heart attack could have been caused by depression over the fact that his son was involved in another court case, this one filed by the actor's own manager, Rose Flaminiano.

Rolito, who was under medication to treat a heart ailment, had complained of chest pains while driving along Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong City on Tuesday. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the Lourdes Memorial Hospital in San Mateo, around 11 p.m. He was 72.

"She kept calling him," Gabby told Inquirer on Thursday night. "And he always wanted to know what was happening to me, even if I kept it from him. He was here by the things she told him."

Flaminiano last week filed a P22-million lawsuit against Gabby for breach of contract. It was her response to a letter that Gabby's lawyers Raymund Fortun sent on Sept. 7, requesting that they free your management contract

GABBY SU

SAMEY Concepcion wears the gown of her Rolito's corpse. With her are (rename) friends (illegible) Rolito's partner Alice Reyes. | Photo by Jay Ganzon

SENATOR Bong blows the candles on his cake while wife Lucy watches, smiling broadly

NAFFA Gutierrez, Bels Mae Quines and Gretchen Barretto

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Exes turn up to greet Bong

By Marinell R. Cruz
Photos by Rudel Bawot

AT SENATOR BONG REVILLA'S (2ND) birthday bash on Wednesday night, some guests smiled their silkiwerens, and some others avoided each other like the plague.

Controversial actress Gretchen Barretto, once romantically linked to Revilla, surprised everyone when she turned up at the party held at the CD Events Place in Greenhills, San Juan. The actress also had a highly publicized spat with Revilla's wife, Lani Mercado, a few years ago.

Guests were also tickled when they saw Gretchen and Lani shake hands and pose for the cameras alongside the birthday boy. Actresses Naffa Gutierrez and Bels Mae Quines—both previously linked to Revilla as well, were among the most intriguing guests.

Revilla, dressed in a red striped button-down shirt, was apparently being jovial. Vice Lopez,

VERA SU

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BONG'S ex-jote and girlfriend Lani Mer-

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2. EAGLE EYE (PG-13) 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
3. DISASTER MOVIE (PG-13) 1:10, 3:05, 5:00, 7:45, 9:50
4. MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL (R-13) 12:00, 2:10, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30
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GABBY and mom Ruby

Gabby blames . . .

Pinoypages

by suicide.

Gabby claimed noncommercials in the suicide, which he signed in January 2008. Flamtaisan took charge of Gabby's throw his parents when the actor returned from a US promotion in the United States.

"My father took it very badly. He did not need to be disturbed that way, not by me or by anybody," said the actor.

Gabby's mom, Maria Lourdes, or "Baby", said Bello was a very emotional person. "All that stress was not good for him," she told Inquirer Entertainment on Friday during a visit to the wake.

The elder Concepcion's remains lie at the chapel of the family-owned G.R. Monteverde in San Juan, on Polavento St., San Juan. Burial is set for this afternoon at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

Baby said Bello was ecstatic when Gabby came home in March. "At the time, Bello al-

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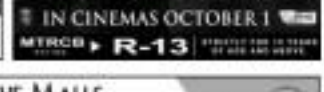

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GLORIETTA 4	1 DISASTER MOVIE	2 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING PANTS 2	3 EAGLE EYE	
	4 STEPBROTHERS	5 I.T.A.L.Y.	6 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	7 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
GREENBELT 1	1 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS		
GREENBELT 2	1 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2 EAGLE EYE		
	3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 DISASTER MOVIE	5 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING PANTS 2	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2 EAGLE EYE		
	3 DISASTER MOVIE	4 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING PANTS 2	5 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	
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MARKET! MARKET!	1 EAGLE EYE	2 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING PANTS 2		
	3 DISASTER MOVIE	4 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	5 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	
TRINOMA	1 I.T.A.L.Y.	2 MELLBOY 3	3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING PANTS 2
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AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

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Christian Life — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's MULAN JR. August 8 to December 14, 2008. For details, call 8722-13 or log on to www.repertoryphilippines.com

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'BF': Believe it or not, I used to be shy

By Marinel R. Cruz

"BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I USED TO BE shy," said "Celebrity Duets" contestant and Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani "BF" Fernando.

Fernando said his shyness was the result of a trauma experienced when he was in the fourth grade.

"I sang in front of the class," he recalled. *Pantyhose also.* The worst part was, my long-time crush was there. After that, I never sang in public for a long time."

Karaoke star

Fernando said it was only during his last year in college, while out on drinking sprees with friends, that he started singing with an audience again. "We did the rounds of karaoke bars," he told a group of entertainment writers over lunch.

As a public official, BF became one of the "Three Texans," along with Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes and former Interior Secretary Joey Lina. Their most recent gig was at the Manila Hotel performance of international singer Hirada (Check where they each participated: two spot numbers, plus crowd participation in number with the visiting artist.

Second season

"I turned down the first offer to appear on 'Celebrity Duets'," he said. "I couldn't reshape this star."

He joked, "I know it's a popular show, but I'm honestly not sure if it would do my political career any good."

As stake in the reality singing contest, now in its second season on GMA 7, is P1 million, half or all of which may be donated to the winner's favorite charity.

It is hosted by singers Ogie Alcasid and Regine Velasquez.

Vocal coach

To prepare for the show, BF said he asked composer Jimi Policarpio for his vocal coach. "I also practice my numbers with my partners and the band in office or my schedule permits," said Fernando.

He last performed with Pinik Pinik—("Machu-chuwapit"), Andrew E ("Mahalin Isaliw"), James Gillis ("Beyond the Sea") and John Lapus ("Copacabana") on the show.

But for dream duet is with Gary Valenciano. "I hope it happens in the coming episodes," said BF.

He admitted that, because of his commitment to the show, he has had to limit his provincial engagements as MMDA chief. "I'm very devoted to this undertaking. Zobel-ahon kon casual, in-dito," he said.

Fernando has consistently been leading in the text voting results. He is competing with beauty queen Carine Aguilar, chef K Gang, comedian and politician Joey Marquez, fashion designer JC Buenaflor and footballer Phil Younghusband.

In fact, two contenders have been eliminated—model and actress Melanie Marquez and beauty expert Gary Quinto.

"I hope that these ratings can show to the people," Fernando said.

"Celebrity Duets" airs Saturday night after "Pinoy Records."

E-mail: metro@inquirer.com.ph

Exes turn up...

From page H5

At Jo? Nida corny temptation. "But should be the theme of this party" he declared. "Tito has always been my wish—to have ng bagay, para ko magkaiba."

Not there

Star observers said talent managers incredible Ramos made sure not to "bump into" GMA 7 ex, creative Wilma Galvante, only when the feud s falling out last month over a disagreement on how the movie of Ramos's son Richard Gutierrez should have been promoted on GMA 7.

Also spotted during the bash were producers Malou Choa-Fagar of "Init! Bahagi," Lily Monteverde of Regal Films, actors Lorna Tolentino, Aga Muhlach, Phillip Salvador, Bossi Aunor Rox, Gretchen Barretto, Eddie Garcia, Jolina Quinambao, Joel Torre, Jeanni Aluarez, Ronnie Ricketts, Mcanrose del Rosario, Ian Veneracion and singer Ogie Alcasid.

Congressmen Prospero Nograles and Dodot Jaworski, Senators Edu Enrile and Jinggoy Estrada and former senator Nikki Coseteng and wife Evelyn were present as well.

BIRTHDAY boy with Raja Garcia

INAH Bonilla and husband Vince del Rosario

INAH, the Bonilla' youngest

BEA Molpeck and Luis Alcalde

HONEDUB del Rosario, Ronnie Ricketts and Phillip Salvador

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GALLERIA

1 EAGLE EYE
2 ROOM 213
3 DISASTER MOVIE
4 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
6 EAGLE EYE
7 I.T.A.L.Y.
8 [illegible]
9 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
10 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2

ERMITA

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2
2 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
4 EAGLE EYE
5 DISASTER MOVIE
6 RESERVED
7 RESERVED
8 I.T.A.L.Y.
9 RIGHTEOUS KILL / BABYLON A.D.

METRO EAST

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2
2 I.T.A.L.Y.
3 EAGLE EYE
4 DISASTER MOVIE
5 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
6 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
7 BABYLON A.D.
8 GRAVEDANCERS

NOVALICHES

1 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
2 EAGLE EYE
3 I.T.A.L.Y.
4 [illegible]

PIONEER

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2
2 EAGLE EYE
3 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
4 DISASTER MOVIE

STA. ROSA

1 PATHOLOGY
2 PERFECT CREATURE
3 PROJECT X
4 I.T.A.L.Y.

LIPA

1 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 BABYLON A.D.
3 DEATH RACE
4 PATHOLOGY

DASMARIÑAS

1 158 FEET
2 EAGLE EYE
3 I.T.A.L.Y.
4 DISASTER MOVIE

IMUS

1 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 158 FEET
3 EAGLE EYE
4 DISASTER MOVIE

ANGELES

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
2 I.T.A.L.Y.
3 BIG STAN
4 RIGHTEOUS KILL

STARMILLS

1 RIGHTEOUS KILL
2 I.T.A.L.Y.
3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
4 FOR THE FIRST TIME
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 BIG STAN

BACOLOD

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
2 BIG STAN
3 JIBOY
4 DEATH RACE
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 I.T.A.L.Y.

ILOILO

1 BABYLON A.D.
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
3 I.T.A.L.Y.
4 DEATH RACE
5 FOR THE FIRST TIME
6 GRAVEDANCERS

Gabby blames manager's calls

From page A1

mostly knew that he was a walking time bomb. But he had prayed hard for Gabby to come home one day," she said.

In any case, Gabby says now her husband did not hold ill feelings for Flaminiano. "He was deeply religious and forgiving," she explained. "I, on the other hand, feel differently. As a mother, my instinct is to protect my child. Maybe in time I'll learn to forgive, but I do think Flaminiano should give me a break."

Gabby always said his dad was the greatest inspiration for his success. "Minda was just consequential."

'Why would I?'

Flaminiano told the Inquirer in a phone interview: "My condolences to the entire Concepcion family. Let us respect Gabby's father and refrain from spreading intrigues."

She dismissed all speculation that she had caused Bobby's passing. "Why should I kill him? Why and I never quarreled for I discussed my misunderstanding with Gabby. He was such a nice guy."

She is not sure she should go to the wake. "Things are still too tense."

At his last PCI-initiated lawsuit against Gabby, Flaminiano said, "Take anyhow."

Different Gabby

"Gabby is in shock," said Angel producer Lily Monteverde.

"He is devastated," agreed Star producer Bobbit Tan.

The two film producers talked with Gabby at the wake.

"He looks native," said Tan, "not the son of Gabby the one who's always smiling and charming. His eyes were red."

The actor's friend, Hadie Montenegro, said Hadie had several clogged arteries, and that only 25 percent of his heart was functioning properly."

Monteverde recalled: "I knew that Gabby was the one who encouraged his dad to take a holiday in Odessan. He didn't expect this would happen so soon after Bobby's return."

She pointed out that Gabby was bound to be profoundly affected by his dad's passing. "Gabby is very attached to his family, especially his dad," Monteverde explained.

"In a previous interview, Concepcion told Inquirer Entertainment that he had considered staying in the US for good.

"Then my dad got sick. Sobi niya: Umuwi ka ha!' If something happens to me, doon pagtatalunan ito. Or sabi niya, 'Are you coming home?' If something happens to me, you may regret not being here.'"

Big risk

In that interview, Concepcion insisted: "Nasaktan ako sa unang pagkakataon. I need to accept everything that happens while I'm in the Philippines because I'm here to deal."

Flaminiano recalled that Concepcion was initially reluctant to come home because of two pending cases, bigamy and falsification of public documents.

"Gabby risked a lot in coming home," said Tan.

Monteverde added, "[But] even though Gabby was involved in a lot of controversies when he was young, his father remained friendly with all the producers."

Gabby blames manager's calls

From page H4

ers. He was always scrolling."

Tan described Bello as "no-nonsense when it comes to business—he was very vocal in my favor to deal with."

Filmmaker Howard Price, who directed rom-com movies ("Hitsuke ni Love" and "I Will Wait for You") that starred Gabby and were purchased by Viva and he enjoyed working with the Concepcions. "They were ideal producers, hands-on, but never heavy-handed. Very generous. We shot in Europe and the US and all the time we were made to feel we were part of a family-run outfit."

Favorite son

Tan pointed out that the young Gabby always showed his dad and then enemy, to Cielo Bello.

"When Gabby does something for my company, Bello, I noticed he would always bring home pasalubong for his dad, usually cigarettes, imported food that knew his father had [crave] tasted."

Montenegro also described Gabby as daddy's boy. Bello's favorite among the seven Concepcion children. "They're very close. Before leaving for work, Gabby would kiss his dad's forehead. Upon returning from tapping, he would greet by his dad's room. If his work setup is early in the morning, he would make sure to eat breakfast with his dad."

Too trusting

"If Gabby gets involved in mattress, it's because he's too trusting," Montenegro said.

Bello was just so trusting, added Tan. "He never meddled in his son's [business]. He would always turn things over to Gabby's manager at the time, Lolit Solis. That's why I think he was very concerned when Gabby had a falling out with his now manager."

Dante Mendoza's "Serbis" bags worldwide distribution deals

Exceptional Filipino film posted at Optima Digital gets picked up by Fortissimo Films, Regent Releasing USA and Maximum Canada

Having earned the respect of critics both local and abroad, director Brillante "Dante" Mendoza's Serbis is now on its way to be seen by more and more audiences around the world.

Serbis was first picked up by international film distributor, Fortissimo Films, for worldwide sales. Regent Releasing and Maximum Film Distribution Inc. bought the rights to distribute the critically acclaimed film in the U.S. and Canada respectively. **As of this writing 13 territories have already bought the film for distribution in their own countries.**

SERBIS
Director: Brillante "Dante" Mendoza
First Filipino Film Ever in Competition at the New York Film Festival
2008 Cyprus International Film Festival: Finalist for the Fipresci FIPF Award
2008 Toronto International Film Festival:
Best Director, Best Actress (Gina Pareño) at the 6th Pacific Meridian in Vladivostok Russia

Aiming to market the film internationally, Mendoza and his foreign co-producer wanted the best quality possible. So they partnered with Optima Digital for post-production using Digital Intermediate process. Serbis was shot in 35 mm and graded on the Resolve IIT – Optima's advanced color grading system. Online editing was done using Autodesk Smoke.

Mendoza struck gold with Serbis when it was chosen as the first ever Filipino film to compete in the prestigious New York Film Festival this year. The movie has also brought so much honor to the country when it took home the Best Director and Best Actress (Gina Pareño) awards at the 6th Pacific Meridian in Vladivostok Russia last September 19.

A movie about a struggling family and an old movie house that doubled as the family's business and living space, it was also chosen earlier this year to compete for the Palme d'Or Award at the Cannes Film Festival – another first for a Filipino film since 1984.

Two more films posted at Optima join the world's best

PUTOL
Director: Carlo Ben Garcia
Official Entry to the 2010 Academy Awards, Best Foreign Language Film Category

Pitong, Dante Garcia's directorial debut, has just been handpicked by the Film Academy of the Philippines to represent the country at the Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film category. Garcia partnered with Optima for the film's post-production. The movie was shot on 35 mm and scanned to 2K format using Pomo and graded on the Resolve IIT.

Chris Martinez' **100** chronicles the last three months of a cancer-stricken woman with a list of 100 things to do before she dies. This film was chosen to compete in the Pusan Film Festival in South Korea. Of course, it was first given due credit by the local independent Filipino film industry when it took Cinemalaya 2008 by storm by bringing home five awards: Best Screenplay, Best Director, Best Actress (Sylvia Sanchez), Best Supporting Actress (Eugene Domingo), and Audience Choice Award.

100
[Official Synopsis: Chris Martinez]
In Competition at the Busan International Film Festival, Busan Cinema Section
2008 Cinemanila Film Festival: Best Director, Best Actress, Maxima Award, Best Supporting Actress, Eugene Domingo, and Audience Choice Award

She film was shot in HD using Panasonic Varicam and converted to XDCAM, as Eugene Boesen, Optima's Head of Digital Intermediate, and Da Vinci 2K Plus to color grade the film.

Optima is proud to be a part of these new triumphs as the company expands and continues to upgrade its facilities. Be it a 30-second commercial or a full-length feature film, raising the bar in post-production is the company's first and foremost objective. Looking forward, Optima hopes to work with more directors, cinematographers and producers to show the world what Filipino films are made of.

For inquiries on Optima Digital's post-production services, please contact: Elsa Dalit or Noel Soy • sales@optimadigital.com
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Rahvin U. Salgados

LOS ANGELES—LEE PACE and Anna Friel are currently TV's most romantic on-screen couple, thanks to their quirky, beloved series, "Pushing Daisies."

Anna, who admitted to being an atypical BFAH, told she is "really terrific" to in their joint interview, the occasionally behind-arms with Lee, who plays Ned, a pie maker who has the power to bring the dead back to life with the touch of his hand. Anna is Chuck, Ned's childhood sweetheart who is really dead but has been resurrected though his touch. They can't touch again or else Chuck will become permanently dead. So they plan his touch when Ned nobody does the hanging look better than Lee, whose hangdog expression is causing many viewers to swoon.

Audiences are also falling for Anna and the rest of the cast. Chi Mcbride, Ellen Greene, Jim Dale

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Pangarap ay abot-kamay.

Para sa Cebuana Lhuillier, walang kapantay ang isang pangarap. Kaya sabado lang, ika-19 na Convention sa Kamuning Auditorium at pagkatapos pwe makasali sa Search ang kapamilya. Kasama niya kami abutin ang mga pangarap ni Sarah kasi mas do magaanan. Hay Cebuana Lhuillier na mabigat sa mga, laging mabigat sa inyong pangarap.

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Jazz artists to create impromptu scores

SUE ENTREPRENEURIAL Management Program batch 2011 of the University of Asia and the Pacific presents "Workto (Misery of Jazz and Independent Short Films) on Oct. 4, 7 p.m. in Trattoria, Greenhills.

"Trio" is a one-night event that will feature the works of Iván Hernández from the University of the Philippines, like Sasha Palomares, Jess Quinzon, Ery Clamor and Joaquin Pedro Valdes.

Critically acclaimed jazz artists will create musical scores for the films, live and on the spot. It is hoped to be a unique audio-visual experience never before tried locally.

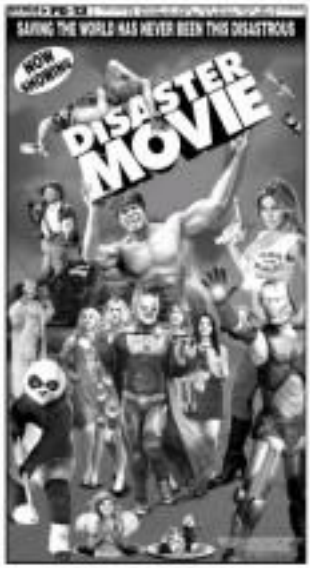
Participants

Ery Clamor, a UP graduate, is recognized locally and internationally, for his productions. She has joined prestigious competitions like the Black Movie Film Festival, UP Film & Video Festival, 22nd MOV International Digital Film Festival, 19th Singapore International Film Festival, 16th & 19th Gawad CCP Para sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video, 14th International Film Festival of Beijing Film Academy, La 240 in Costa Rica, 8th Cinemanila International Film Festival, Film Your Issue Competition in New York, and Asian Northern Film Festival in Berlin.

Sasha S. Palomares is a fresh graduate of the UP Film Institute and is currently under the tutelage of Nap Jamir. Her films tell poignant, if obscure, stories of women.

Jimi Concepcion, another graduate of the institute, is also a teacher of Psychology, Marketing and Sales at the College of St. Benilde, Philippine Women's University and San Beda College.

Johnny Alegre is the front man of Human Folk, a jazz and world music fusion group. A seasoned guitarist, he has recorded several albums under Candil Records and received acclaim from the jazz press in London and Los Angeles. He also has several session credits with jazz artists from New York. In Human Folk he collaborates with award-winning musician Cynthia Alexander and Mideh Lopez, keyboardist of electronica bands Imp and



JOHNNY Alegre

JONATHAN Gonzales

Trumpeter

Rubber Inc.

Jonathan Gonzales is a protégé of patriot master Jose Valdez. He is active in the festival circuit and has been a National Commission for Culture and the Arts featured artist.

More artists

Ateneo Chamber, is composed of conservatory students' musicians from the UP College of Music and St. Scholastica's College School of Music. The band's music combines jazz and R&B rhythms with unique Philippine flavors.

Edmund Chua is one of the best bass players in the country. He has worked with the UST Jazz Ensemble, 3rd and Tropikanya.

Erich Jan Pascua is a seasoned keyboardist. L is a student of drums guru Michael Alba, and was a percussionist with the Manila Symphony Orchestra.

Tilt winners

With the artists will be featured the winners of a competition on short independent film making sponsored by "Project Velocity."

Tickets for "Vivid" are available at the School of Management Office, University of Asia and the Pacific, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Or visit www.uap.ph.

A SCENE from "Kinderszenen Block," one of the featured movies to be screened.

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"Eagle Eye" is a race-against-time thriller starring Shia LaBeouf Michelle Monaghan Rosario Dawson Anthony Mackie and Billy Bob Thornton.

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JOR

FEEDBACK

Too graphic for television

From: I. Cruz, Los Angeles (info@inbox.com)

I am writing regarding an ABS-CBN show that is too graphic for television. As a mother, I want to model this space values to my children who were born and raised here in the US.

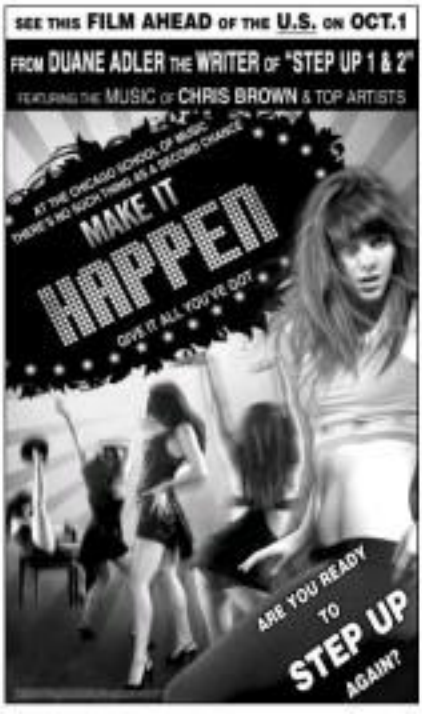
They enjoy watching Pilipino shows. In shooting the soap opera, no. So I allow them to. For tonight, I was disturbed by a scene in "Lupin (or Bubble)" where Jon Mitra was tied up to bed and a man was doing something to her breasts. Other kids showed the man's back and this Mitra's upper body and face but still no one is stupid not to know what exactly was going out. There was also a flashback where Jon Mitra also Jennifer was being sexually assaulted as a child.

Offensive

It was too late when I intervened and asked my children to close their eyes. How can this kind be shown on international television? IT IS against offensive for a personal like me, what more for my children?

I am a big fan of ABS-CBN/TFC but there is no way I would tolerate such obscenity on television.

We always look forward to watching TFC at night during the leisure time. Now I don't even know if I should let them watch anything on TFC, with all the rape scenes, kidnapping and violence on tv shows.



Effective portrayals energize new action-drama series

JERICHO ROSALES HAS A LOT riding on his new television series, "Rated Inang Singh," which started showcasing on ABS-CBN last Sept. 15. If it makes waves in the ratings, it will reinvigorate his professional career, which is in need of a boost due to a number of issues, following factors in the past (his "Darating" series didn't do as well as expected, etc.).

So, what's we wish had the first release of "Rated Inang Singh," we initially focused on Antchet's portrayal of the series' central protagonist.

We liked what we saw, because Antchet's role as orphan and drug dealer/gang cop with a right cop behind his imbroved his character with the right mix of toughness and sensitivity and consolidated himself in our estimation as the young adult actor to beat on the local TV-film scene.

Even better, his scenes with the Aiza Seguerra leading lady Carmen Soo, came off well, with the two leads exuding both valor and verve. They had the "chemistry" that people keep talking about, and yet only too rarely find on the local performing scene.

Carmen is quite a find, because her portrayal is strong yet fit, and informed with an attractive intelligence that eludes most young leading ladies in these parts.

With both Jericho and Carmen doing well in their new

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

shows's initial episode, we look forward to keeping tabs on the series' plot and character development in the coming weeks.

In other words, the production needs to work on its believability, so that viewers can fully empathize with its characters, events and themes. With these and other improvements, "Rated Inang Singh" should more convincingly match the high level of performance set by its two young leads.

To do that, however, the production needs to get its overall act together. The new show's second telecast (misspelled name there: A long car chase was stupidly paced, some supposedly "exciting" scenes failed to generate genuine fear or fervor, and there were too many "coincidences" that made the proceedings even less believable than they already were.

If these glitches aren't fixed, the show could be in trouble. Let's hope that the script and production doctors remember work quickly on "Rated Inang Singh" can come into its own: as the compelling action-adventure-drama-romance-travelogue production it obviously aspires to be.

'Teach Me to Love'

In his second digital feature, "Teach Me to Love," National Artist for Film Eddie Romero has cast an interesting pair in his romantic movie's lead players: Mimi Taylor is a beleaguered high school teacher who falls for her student, played by Nathan Lopez (of "Stainless Obsession" fame).

Also in the film, which is now showing at Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Ermita, are Yam Concepcion, Ricky Davao, Archie Aquino, Kristel Moreno and Emelie Garcia.

'Bedtime Stories'

Just in time for the Yuletide season, Disney's "Bedtime Stories" stars Adam Sandler as Skeeter Bronstein, a hotel handyman whose life is changed forever when the bedtime stories he tells nieces and nephew mysteriously start coming true.

He attempts to take advantage of this phenomenon, incorporating his own aspirations into one outlandish tale after another, but it's the kids' unexpected contributions that turn Skeeter's life upside down!

More shrill than thrilling

LOS ANGELES—HAL GOOD Maddin in "Eagle Eye," a shrill, frantic thriller about technology taking over—and not in good ways, like making coffee for you before you even realize you want it.

So, this supercomputer has a political agenda, which disconcertingly might seem timely with the presidential election approaching. Instead, this half-baked indictment of the Border Act and the war on terror feels a few years too late —maybe because that's unless executive producer Steven Spielberg originally came up with the nugget of an idea that "Eagle Eye" would become.

Oddly calm voice

Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monaghan co-star as Jerry and Rachel, strangers who are forced to work together when their lives are commandeered by an oddly calm but insistent female voice—like the one on your GPS but, you know, evil. (She's everywhere, on their cell phones, on other people's cell phones. She can manipulate stop lights and air traffic, monitor every surveillance camera on the planet and send messages through TV monitors and electronic billboards. She makes the duo act as armored couch, even stow away aboard a military plane.

But why is she doing this? What does she want? That's the mostly anaphasic mystery to be uncovered in the film from D.J. Caruso, reuniting with LaBeouf, whom he directed in the 2007 surprise hit "Disturbia."

Jerry is an unemployed slacker who's been living off his achieving copy store employee and Stanford dropout whose identical twin brother, a rising Air Force star, recently was killed on a car accident. Rachel is a single mom whose young son is on the receiving Washington expedition with the school band at the Kennedy Center. The ad insurance area which they're over-seeing becomes increasingly fun-fueled, to the point where they're not even mildly outraged by their inexplicable enthusiasm.

Caruso has put together a couple of heavy-pacing sequences. A race through the ramps and customer bays of an airport cargo hold is clever and has a fun tangibility about it but most of the action is edited in headache-inducing fashion. A car chase through the streets of Chicago is an incoherent, noisy jumble of crushed metal, shattered glass, blaring sirens and flashing lights.

LaBeouf and Monaghan, redhunky blonde and wisecracks, can't elevate this B-material. Following the blockbusters "Transformers" and "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," in which LaBeouf played a young man on the verge of adulthood, "Eagle Eye" is clearly meant to establish his emergence as a grown-up.

REVIEW

Great mistakes

Members of the strong supporting cast are equally shortchanged. Billy Bob Thornton as the sarcastic FBI investigator who suspects that Jerry is a terrorist and Michael Chiklis as the secretary of defense. It's of vague interest to see Chiklis play a good guy somewhere within a traditional political realm, after starring for the past several years as rogue cop "Vic Mackey on "The Shield." But then he's saddled with spelling out the movie's rather obvious message: "We made a pose many mistakes. ... The very measures we put into place to safeguard our liberties become threats to liberty itself."

AP

Entertainment history this week

DID YOU KNOW...

1951: Actor James Dean was killed in the collision of his sports car with another automobile near Cholame, California. He was 24.

1967: Connie Francis recorded "Who's Sorry Now." She hated the song but was dedicated to after an argument with her father.

1985: "MacGyver" made its debut on ABC.

1995: Actor Rock Hudson died in his home in Beverly Hills, California, after battling AIDS. He was 59.

2005: Actress Halle Berry and musician Eric Benet announced they were separating. They had been married less than three years.

2004: Billy Joel married Katie Lee in his home on Long Island, New York. He was 55, she was 23.

2008: The divorce between Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston was finalized.

Lee Pace, Anna Friel . . . From page 5

(narrator), Fernando Xavier and Kristin Chenoweth, whom we featured in our column last Saturday and the show's imaginative writing and colorful look. While key scenes take place in Ned's The Pie Hole restaurant, "Pushing Daisies" features extensive scenes that take the series back into the 1920s, a former life, Bryan Fuller created the series which received limited play and Golden Globe nominations, with early episodes directed by Barry Sonnenfeld.

Below are excerpts of our chat with Lee and Anna:

How do you express your love to one another, bearing in mind that you can't touch?

ANNA: It's all about the eyes. The challenge is to be able to show you love someone without being able to touch because it touch can express so much, so many words. I look into those lovely chrome eyes (of Lee's) and it's not that hard.

LEE: It gives us something to play with.

They come up with crumbs; ways for you to kiss, like through Saran Wrap.

A: The last script we got said, "Ned and Chuck have their first rehearsal." I don't know how we're going to get around that one. I am going to be quite scared, I think (laughter).

L: But it gives us something good to do. Because a lot of the show is about heartbreak and about how people who desperately want to connect but can't. Ned and Chuck do want to connect. In the second season, you will really see that deep longing to connect but it is ever harder.

It's interesting that touching through plastic like Saran Wrap doesn't count.

A: I know, isn't it?

How adult can that be?

A: The plastic starts to get thinner and thinner. You wanted than it would break. But I would be a nice way to die, at least it would be death with a beautiful kiss.

In real life, how much of a touch person are you?

A: I'm really tactile. I'm very close to my mum and dad. I get my big bearly hugs all the time. It's not nice to be able to touch with someone so gorgeous for Lee to and not be able to go "Hi" (and she demonstrated physical contact by locking arms with Lee's).

L: I remember I have a hard time getting close to people. Anna caught me where we were shooting. Someone had come up to me and touched me. I kind of flinched. Anna said, "That's bad."

How challenging is it to keep remembering the no-touch rule while you are taping scenes?

A: We do get in trouble a lot because we forget we are not supposed to touch, especially if it's an emotional scene.

Since you play childhood sweethearts who shared the first kiss, can you tell us about your first kiss in real life?

L: My first kiss was very awkward. I'll say the girl's name if you pls promise not to print it (laughter).

It's just between us (laughter).

L: Our names is actually very funny. It's mentioned the name (I) was sweeping or walking past the back of the junior high school and holding her hands. Both our hands were all sweaty. We kissed and we didn't know what to do with our tongues. Then we pulled away and went like, "Was that it?" Yeah, I think that's it (laughter). All right, let's go home."

A: I got taught. I got to practice. I used to go to my godparents every weekend. Their son taught me how to do it (laughter) because I didn't know how. He showed me on his hand so it wasn't particularly romantic. I thought, at least when it does get romantic, I'll know what to do. My girlfriends and I used to lie in bed and we'd practice on our own hands. I don't know how many girls will ever tell you us doing that. You quite don't have what to do with the tongue bit.

What kind of comments about the show or your characters do you get from strangers?

L: I get the "Oh, dealer my hand. Oh, I'm dead" bit.

The show has a lot of rabid fans who ask questions about your powers on the Internet like if Ned touches a skeleton, will that skeleton come back to life in their consciousness?

L: One of the things I love about Ned is that Bryan Fuller wrote the character in such a way that Ned doesn't know the extent of his powers. There are things he's still going to discover.

The show, in a way, reflects our fascination with the topic of death.

L: It's one of the big mysteries. I remember being in a church in New York. The pastor talked about how one of the things that separates us from animals is that we are the only species to die. But I know we're going to die, but I know pastor people close to us, that we're going to have to deal with the pain. The pastor said that's what brings us to look for God, that the show is about life primarily.

TV shows changed your lifestyle?

L: I rent my house. I lease my car. It's just me and my dog. I camp on the weekends. There's a lot of really beautiful places around California. I like to hike in the Joshua Tree National Park. There's beautiful wildlife around here. I like every morning. If I'm not called to work early in the morning, I take the dog out to Runyon Canyon Park. He's an English pointer. His name is Carl. I just love my phone. I would have a picture of him on my phone.

I like being alone a lot. I don't really love a fast-track Hollywood life. I dream about having a house by the water and not doing anything, not feeling ambitious nor having the need to make money.

A: I'm the opposite of Lee. I love being with people. I'm not very good at being on my own because I come from a big family. I'd much rather have my mum and dad here. That makes me sound like a baby, doesn't it?

Books you can give on the set?

L: Ned never can give because he touched all the food. Chuck can't touch anything. Chuck can't touch the pie.

A: We have a real pie cooler. The Pie Hole actually smells of freshly cooked pie because there's a vent in the back of the thin kitchen where cooling and pies all the time. It's really hard to be disciplined (not to eat the pie).

What can we expect in the new season?

L: We get into Chuck and Ned's families a lot. We see their fathers again.

If you really had the power to bring dead people back in life, who would you touch?

A: Gandhi, because the world is in desperate need of a great leader. The world does have a lot of things to handle. It's a very messed up world at the minute.

L: If I may look just about everyone for a minute. I wouldn't let anyone live longer than a minute because someone else has to die.

E-mail the columnist at entertainment@philstar.com and read his blog, "The Napoleon Report," on http://blog.inquirer.net/inquirerpen1.

Vina's happy, but pregnancy not hassle-free

By the Entertainment Staff

IT'S OFFICIAL. AND, WITH A SHORT text message, sleeper-sizzler Vina Morales confirmed her pregnancy: "I am very happy... I will be a mother soon. I never intended to hide my condition."

Rikke Dyline, PR and Publicity head of Star Magic, told the Inquirer: "She's two months pregnant and the father is her number six boyfriend Cedric Lee." (Actually when Bruten first asked, Dyline seemed a little peeved, and said, "Didn't Vina deny that already?").

One sure spot is that the annulment of Cedric's marriage is still ongoing.

Inquirer consulted lawyer and TV host Eddy Gumaporman of "Unang Hirit," who said, "Even if there is a pending case for declaration of nullity there are still be a case for concubinage, [which] is different from adultery, [though] concubinage is harder to prove."

According to previously published reports, Cedric, a businessman, has two kids with Sally Ann Lizardo.

Meanwhile Gorman Morales, whose son Bulentas is married to Vina's sister Sheila, and the whole family is "very happy."

A talent of ABS-CBN's Star Magic, Vina is scheduled to give an interview on the network's talk show "The Buzz" today.

Outed in the lift

If you wonder into a conversation building somewhere in Ortigas Center, look for a seemingly innocent note posted inside the lift.

It's a list of delinquent tenants who've not paid rent. Among those on the dishonor roll is former Mayleen Idol.

And what's this? PAL is renting the list with another tract.

I love rent!

Exhausted, not suicidal

At the press con for her latest gag show, "Parasite Split," Cristine Reyes denied the rumor that she attempted suicide.

She told Bushra, "That made me laugh. I was in the hospital because of fatigue. I work almost every day... but it's okay. This is what I wished for." To be busy, that is.

Double take

Veteran Actress failed to recognize Actor-turned-Filmmaker as a gala event.

VA stumbled to a gal. "M" looked very different when we worked together. Maybe plastic surgery?"

Return of prodigal baby

Lily Monteverde celebrates her 40th anniversary in the biz this year with a big do-bang. Besides her own part and present Regal luminaries who will have special video messages for her.

Among those on the guest list, reportedly, is prodigal Regal daughter Angel Locsin, who's been very vocal about wanting to make amends with Mother Lily.

Diva showcase

In the works is a major concert at the Big Dome starring four divas: Ruth Lorkenzo, Joanna Padilla, Regine Velasquez and Pops Fernandez.

The event is already a target for its major-ness, in this diva-showcase last bet. It's an attempt to top Regine's planned showdown with Lani Misalucha in February?

Price of nudity

Young Actor sounded Dimitri Friend about topless offer. "I'll be paid more than P20,000, but I'll have to bare my body."

"I told Vic to follow his instincts. VA quipped, "I think it's a bad idea."

Bardaweg on the negotiation, really, because VA it is talent. Plus, the film director is known for filming more than others's necessary or acceptable.

VA is ripe for exploitation, especially after his sexy online photos went largely viewed, to say the least.

Tough journey

Life on the road has been tough so far for Jeanny's new front man, Fhaxy Jamel Pineda.

In the Oct. 2 tour of Pulling Heart wag, mine, Hoodz, 42, who's lead dude Neal Schon discovered on YouTube, praised out his musician while on tour.

Pineda said he told Schon he wanted to back out, moments before his first gig with Journey in Cebu last February. Schon's reply: "It's my last... Go sing for us."

Pineda misses his girlfriend and son in Manila. "It's very, very sad," he said in the interview. "There are days when I just break down... This is a job I'm doing for my family—that's all the consolation I'm getting."

He also said he had yet to enjoy the perks of traveling, because his routine: simply fold, commit of bus rides, sleeping in hotels, sound checks... "It's a fantastic job for, as the saying goes. It's a curse." He said when he would surely quit if he got sick. "I guess that's the same reason Steve Perry called out."

The current Journey tour is said to be the 30th highest-grossing in the US this summer.

Song of respect

Sammy Zamiga recently recorded a song titled "Kumindot"—a tie up from the local song that made him famous.

He explains, "When I choose a song to interpret, I listen to the melody first. Then, I consider the lyrics, the message. This song intrigued me, and challenged me as an artist."

"Kumindot" promises adventure and respect, said executive producer Nelia Uno. "It's just so rad that radio stations are not keen on playing it."

No small roles

"There are no small or big roles for one as an artist," says Arnold Reyes, who has just finished four (!) indie films—"Zapata" headlined by Phelix Fuentes, "Pacheo," co-starring Rhio Avila, "Pasyal," directed by Cesar Apellanes, and "Ligo in Lapu," a project of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Yes but,

"I like the fresh, creative and edgy ideas of young filmmakers," Arnold, a theatre talent says. "They loosely explore new themes and techniques."

Amen to that.

Walk the walk

Ian Galicado and Regine Tolentino are supporting Avon's "2009 Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer" campaign.

A big part of this campaign is the annual walk on Oct. 3. This year, the event is called "I Walk with 30,000 for a Healthier Tomorrow" it starts from 30 locations across the country. Ian and Regine invites all women to log on to www.avon.com.ph for details.

Murder on his mind

NEW YORK—Hollywood veteran Robert Wagner, may be was so distraught over the breaking of his first marriage to actress Natalie Wood, that he pondered suicide and wanted to settle a gun outside the home of her lover, Warren Beatty, intent on killing him.

"Pieces of My Heart," Wagner's autobiography released this week, reveals details of his career and life, including the split with Wood, their decision to remarry a decade later, in 1972, and her drowning death in 1981.

Beatty, who met Wood on the set of "Splendor in the Grass," in 1961 "was pretty smooth, very attractive. He was the man," Wagner, 79, said.

Wagner said he was "absolutely paralyzed" in November 1981, when Wood's body was found floating off Southern California's Catalina Island. They had been staying on their boat with Christopher Walken, her co-star in the movie "Brainstorm." Wagner said he believes Wood accidentally fell overboard. Reuters

What they said

Entertainment quotes this past week, from The Inquirer.Net:

"I was the first chanteuse I made as a lady"—Chay Hilario, acknowledging that he's gay in an interview in People magazine.

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"We've had old banners being held up, new banners being held up, people singing the old songs, partying with the new songs, fans throwing stamps with them dancing on."—Brenda Mage-Bag, on the current reunion tour of Three Kids on the Block.

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"I've been out on the street, I know what it's about."—Tyler Perry (actress, writer, actor and director), who has dared enough food to feed 1,000 families for rare weeks in Arizona. AP

Hear dare you

A BIG GIG Reyes wears young filmmakers's to-be-for-his acting career.

ARMEL Fhaxie, happy-sad journey from stardom says he wanted to bail out before his first gig with the band.

LOS ANGELES—Aerosmith front man Steven Tyler on Wednesday sued singer-songwriter who the singer said invaded his privacy on the Web, writing about the death of his mother and other "intimate details" from his life.

In a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles, Tyler, 61, said he didn't know the real names of those who have impersonated him and girlfriend Erin Brady on the Web, but he believes the same group was responsible for similar postings in 2007.

At that time, Tyler asked Google to remove the blogs, and the Internet company complied. On Wednesday the new batch was unavailable for public viewing. Reuters

Hathaway, lawyer

LOS ANGELES—Anne Hathaway will next play the role of a lawyer who refuses to commit to love, in an adaptation of the best-selling book "The Opposite of Love," according to press reports Thursday.

Hathaway, 26, a currently receiving critical acclaim, and fame at an Oscar nomination, for her role as a disturbed young woman in the newly released "Rachel Getting Married."

"The Opposite of Love" sees the oldest novel by Julie Matthews, and the adaptation will be produced by studio 20th Century Fox. AFP

Massive footage sold

MELBOURNE—Rare film footage of Marilyn Monroe on the set of her 1959 hit "Some Like It Hot" sold at auction for 17,500 Australian dollars, or US$14,624.

The two-and-a-half minute 8 mm film, which features Monroe goofing around with co-stars Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, was shot by a US naval officer who was invited to the set after Monroe visited his base in San Diego.

The seller's daughter, who moved to Australia's Victoria state, discovered the film by chance among her late father's belongings. The footage was snapped up Thursday by an unnamed collector from Sydney. AP

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Top of the tabloids

The top three hits stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are amused, if we are amused.)

Peek of the week

•Muriel Rodriguez, besoks ang boobs! (Hoy, subere, subere and subo! Eme, subo!)

•Jillian Ramos di magpapakita ng boobs! (They're one.)

•Julius Magdangal pinagbabawalang ipakita ni Bella Mae Quimio' (Ano ba? Eme, really?)

•Bella Mae, inaasong naging bahagi ng kanyang endorsers si Mark Bautista! (Where, why and how? Eme, how?)

Quote me not

•"Hindi bayaw! si Cristine Reyes sa GMA...Emosh. Tells (Is he network spokesperson now?)

•Angelu de Leon: Mini-nursing videos on James Yap (Ill of wala.)

•Ayoko pang magkapera—Kim. (Did she throw up inside her tv shirt?)

Gabo's woes

•Gabby Concepcion, nanunumpong na ITLOG ang pala ang bayad kada taping! (That's close to $3,000.)

•Gabby utatay ang manager sa pagbi-manay ng kanyang anak. (Ano daw? Ay, para silbungpon.)

•Mommy Rose nalalaglagbol sa pagpanon ng anak ni Gabby. (Ano kaya mangyayari?)

•Mommy Rose Pangilinan, kung li-lang buon hindi magpapamasid si Gabby. (Pinatawad na, pinatay.)

•Bonita Pangilinan, umeeksang kunda si Jhanna Magkalapad. (Walang kapaeksang-eksang sana, ha?)

Lost and found

•John Lloyd Cruz nanunili magmamay! (Magsisi agad?)

•Mahabagkulan ang rabahapan ni Sam Amiel tungkol sa Aranis ni John Hendrix! (Of course misunderstanding together.)

•Bianca Gonzalez nagsisimpay sa Italy dahil nobyo! (Ano? Ay, para sa nobyo pala.)

•Bella Gutierrez, mag-dyowa sa Hong Kong?! (Ho-ho.)

•Nagsasalo si John Estrada! (May nagsasalo kasi.)

•Robin Padilla takot na takot sa parting! (Same ito.)

Sandy's secret

•Sandy Garossa, si Bayani Cruz ang nakapagsing-grabe?! (Bakit naman nakapagsing... di naman siya DJ?)

•Sandy Ann magpebreak dahil sa mga bidyo! (Bypass na nang mga boyfriend.)

•Bayani pulgas na kay Sandy Ann... (...?)

•Sandy ang nagpapagsing sunog ID ni Sandy. (Sigurado?... ?)

Ay, hahing!

•Angel Locsin at Luis Manzano pag nagsing sayawa, walang problema kay Edu. (Hmmmm? Eh kasi.)

•Mga Jilian at Nadia Montenegro di-dinaking ng interesanan. (Ayos.)

•Binagsing Janice De Belen-Gutierrez Montenegro nang aminin kay Nadia. (Hindi ba sa tabi?)

•Dinagdag Sunnen pasasalya si Marian Rivera-Kay John Lloyd. (Of course.)

•Annajun Miranda, kapagpagamit ng lang para pakakot kasi sa Obama sick, sweet ooo.)

•Robin dapat nag-sorry kay Jinkal! (Di dapat kay Lizelle?)

•Annajun pasaya ayah kay Derick Garcia! (Oh, pa-be papa-in?)

•Nina Morales Binoriz kay aske ni-nam?! (Happy daw-aya at ha?)

•Chocolate ang pinagbibiran ni Vina. (Ano ito, ang hinahanap?)

•Nadia 2 nakalakang kendo ang pinagsasabi? (Ang laki nga.)

•Charlene Gonzales Abad! nanandan kay Rita Rudaina. (May kaya para siya?)

•Mga bidyo ni Bong Revilla nagkaroon ng sex. (Mag-sex pa siya?)

•Lani Mercado inilipat na sa jobs ni Regine Quimio. (Jacqueline lang ito?)

(Batidera, Tiyuhan)

(E-mail us: mahusay@inquirer.com.ph)

CRISTINE Reyes busy, not suicidal.

LAUGHS Valenzuela and Jordan in sight of New Kids on the Block.

USA Cabrado, left, and Regine Tolentino, right, with Avon Philippines president and GM Bob Brinker.

Experience Super Chefs at SM Hypermarket

There are so many exciting things happening in SM Hypermarket. As the leading innovator in the food retail industry, it is once again rolling out the highly successful Super Chef series events in all of its branches this October and November.

Aspiring chefs and also mothers, who just love to prepare healthy and delicious dishes for the family, will once again be treated to new recipes and tips on cooking by selected chefs led by the well-known Chef Tristan. Popular celebrities will also grace the event to showcase and share their own recipes and talents in cooking.

SM Hypermarket has become not only a great place to shop but also a place to learn and be entertained because of the events and interactive programs that it offers to its shoppers. Catch the Super Chefs from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at the following branches:

Molino on Oct 1-5 & 29-31; Bicutan on Oct 8-12 & Nov 5-9; Sucat on Oct 15-19 & Nov 12-16; Muntinlupa on Oct 22-26 & Nov 19; Marilao on Oct 1-5 & Nov 5-9; Valenzuela on Oct 8-12 & Nov 12-16; Clark on Oct 15-21; North Edsa on Oct 15-17 & 28-30; Taytay on Oct 1-5 & Oct 29-31; Pasig on Oct 8-12 & Nov 5-9; MOA on Oct 22-26 & Nov 12-16.

Super Chef shares new cooking tips and recipes to SM Hypermarket shoppers

Imported specialty veggies - get them in SM Hypermarket's Fresh Section

SM Hypermarket is becoming more and more popular because of its Fresh Section. It is a destination for a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables both local and imported, and complete selection of fresh seafood and meat.

Now, SM Hypermarket Fresh offers imported specialty vegetables for chefs and food connoisseurs alike. Also, foreigners who now live in Manila troop to SM Hypermarket to buy imported vegetables for their favorite dishes. From the widest range of mushroom to brussel sprout, borduck, chili-bud and lotus root - these can now be found in the Fresh Section of SM Hypermarket.

Try out these new items and make your favorite dishes extraordinary.